Week ending January 31 1948

Every Thursday Threepence

JOHN BULL

ARE THE FOREIGN KINGS FINISHED?

PAGE 5

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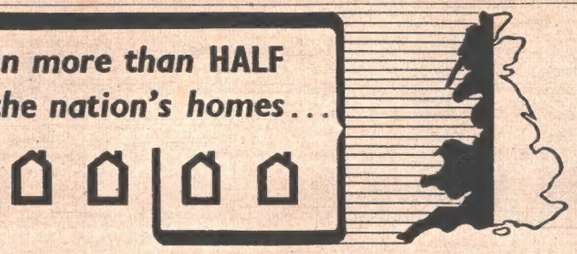

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Lobelline is your safeguard this winter.

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For every kind of Cough

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Cuticura Soap gives your skin a mild but thorough antiseptic cleansing which clears away blemishes and restores radiant youthful loveliness

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Kellogg's ALL-BRAN *is the rich outer layers of wheat deliciously flavoured with malt and sugar*

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DEPRESSED NERVY RUN-DOWN

The Treatment

The feeling that life is a burden—the awful tiredness before the day is even begun—the way you find the smallest things irritate you—perhaps it all means that the strain of the war years has made you the victim of a condition of "poor tone"; that your whole body needs re-charging with vitality. Not with a simple pick-me-up, but with Dr. Cassell's Tablets—the fine tonic medicine that has worked wonders for thousands of sufferers. Day by day you will find vitality flowing back into your system. Mineral foods will enrich the blood. A special digestive will settle the stomach. Soon you will face life full of energy and confidence—thanks to Dr. Cassell's Tablets. Price 1/6 and 3/8 incl. Purchase Tax.

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For over 40 years many thousands of users have gratefully acknowledged the beneficial results of Dr. Cassell's Tablets. To-day, thousands more, suffering from war-weariness and lassitude after the recent difficult years, are amazed at their wonderful restorative qualities.

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JANUARY 31, 1948 VOLUME 83 NUMBER 2170

What Marshall Aid Means

ALL AMERICA IS TALKING about the Marshall Plan to spend many millions of dollars on the reconstruction of Europe. So is most of Europe. And, in Britain, the discussion is now at such cross-purposes that anyone would think the Americans were proposing not to help us, but to hinder us; not to display open-handed generosity, but to undermine and enslave us!

The real issues have become completely distorted and confused. Some British newspapers have actually been conducting a campaign against the Plan on the grounds, apparently, that any aid the Americans are willing to give us will be a new kind of dollar-dole, with so many strings attached that we'd be better without it.

This is vicious and harmful bunkum.

The first important point is that nobody suggests we should base our national economic budget on the certainty of Marshall aid. The Government has made that plain enough. The facts make it plainer.

The Marshall Plan is still only a Plan. It has not been—and even yet may not be—accepted by the American Congress. To bank on it, therefore, would be the sheerest folly.

And, even if the Plan is finally carried through, in one form or another, it is based, not on any kind of dollar-dole, but on the provision of American aid in a variety of ways to be worked out by experts with the avowed object and intention of restoring European economy and productive power.

The emphasis is on the word European—and this is the clue to the second vital point about the Plan. It is not a new help-for-Britain idea, but a farsighted effort to effect the mutual rehabilitation of many nations shattered by the war. Its ultimate success will depend on collaboration among the sixteen nations participating. For Britain to stand aside—on any grounds whatsoever — would be equivalent to a declaration that we don't care what happens to the rest of Europe. Which is such obvious nonsense that it needs no further comment.

"No" to State Gambling

THE GOVERNMENT IS BEING PRESSED to start a State lottery.

It is claimed that this would bring in £2,000 millions a year, of which nearly half would be profit and could be applied to reducing taxation.

Why, it is argued, should football pool promoters rake in the millions of small gamblers' gold? Why cannot we do as other countries do, and divert this money to the Treasury?

The Government should turn down this project, firmly and loudly, once and for all.

Gambling, in whatever form, should not be encouraged by the State, whether for pious people or pagans; for rich or poor; for young or old.

The Government should be no party to it, however honestly and respectably it may be conducted, and however the profits are spent.

Yet people will go on gambling? Of course they will; and there is a strong case for betting taxes on what the public insists on doing. The present Government has already recognized this case and acted on it.

That is a different thing from using the power of the State to authorize and organize large-scale gambling.

Great controversial issues are raised every time this subject is discussed. It is impossible to satisfy everybody's consciences and desires at the same time. So the decision should—and must—be "No State lottery."

The Children's Charter

CHILDREN ARE WHAT grown-ups make them. Heredity tells, of course, in the long run, but you can train a boy to be either a criminal or a good citizen. And every child is at the mercy of one or more grown-ups.

Most parents have always realized these facts and acted upon them according to their lights. But it has taken the nation a mighty long time to realize that it must make itself the responsible parent of children who have lost their fathers and mothers and are for any reason left friendless and homeless.

At last, however, we can welcome the Children Bill, which will end the worst evils caused by neglect and cruelty in the past. It is good news that this Bill, which will hardly incur much opposition, is to become law before next summer.

Then Father Chuter Ede in England and Wales, and Father Arthur Woodburn in Scotland, will take over their enormous new families totalling nearly 140,000 children. That will be an important milestone in the march of our civilization.

Steps to Safety

TWO ATTEMPTS TO MAKE life safer deserve to be praised—as far as they go.

A new system of controlling air traffic in bad weather is coming into force all over Britain. The aim is to cut down risk of collisions and help pilots to land in bad visibility.

Had the system been introduced before, some of last winter's shocking air accidents might have been averted. But better late than never.

What JOHN BULL still hopes to see is a real international code of air safety regulations. The knowledge and experience are there; the gadgets are ready—all that is lacking is the will to co-operate between the nations.

Back on the ground, Mr. Barnes, the Minister of Transport, has started a permanent committee to study how to prevent road accidents. In other words, some continuous official effort is at last being made to stop the waste of life which happens every day.

We would recommend the committee to start its discussions from this basic fact—that most accidents are collisions between road-users of different kinds, such as pedestrians and cars, buses and bicycles.

They collide partly because they travel at different speeds in different ways. Anything which can be done to sort out the various forms of traffic and keep them apart will at once reduce the number of accidents.

To do this might involve sacrifice of some rights by all classes of road-users. But surely it would be worth while if it reduced the frightful casualties.

"It's a treat to make such lovely puddings again!"

You'll find Carnation Milk wonderful for pudding making and for all milk uses . . . Remember, it is pure fresh cows' milk from which part of the water has been removed by evaporation. Therefore, you simply add water as directed on the label to make rich creamy milk.

EVEN A CHILD CAN BAKE BEAUTIFULLY NOW!

TENDER-TEXTURE every time — if you use Miller's, the baking powder with the *sure* action. You see, Miller's starts to work in the mixing bowl and *goes on working* evenly, dependably to make your baking feather-light. Miller's means *success!* See the difference in *all* your baking. Get a tin to-day.

MILLER'S BRITISH BAKING POWDER with the SURE action

To-day—delight your youngsters with CHOCO-CHUNKS

8 ozs. plain flour, 1 teaspoon Miller's British Baking Powder, 2½ ozs. margarine, 3 ozs. brown sugar, 1 egg, pinch of salt, 2 ozs. plain chocolate, few drops vanilla, little milk.

Sieve flour, salt and Miller's into bowl. Rub in fat. Add sugar, chopped chocolate. Blend to stiff dough with egg and milk. Place forkfuls on greased baking sheet. Bake in good oven 20 minutes.

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Drawn by ILLINGWORTH (wearing his overcoat).
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*Peak periods are 8 a.m. to 12 noon and 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. during the working week

R.D.A.

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A mother guards her family from hidden dangers when she insists on the Izal Toilet Roll that bears the Green Cross. For wherever disease is fought in hospital and laboratory the Green Cross is honoured. It is the sign of Izal Germicide, proved destroyer of germs.

IZAL TOILET ROLL
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Harpic is specially made for lavatory cleansing. It not only cleans and disinfects the whole pan—it sweeps right round the S-bend at the back where no brush can reach—kills germs, leaves the whole pan clean and sweet.

Harpic is still not plentiful, but we are doing our best to meet your requirements

HARPIC

Specially made for the lavatory

Harpic Mfg. Co. Ltd., Hull and London

"My guests sang my praises when I served that extra-flavour Maxwell House Coffee"

Yes, they were unusually lyrical . . . but then Maxwell House is an unusually harmonious blend of fine coffees. It is rich, mellow, full-bodied, with all its fragrant freshness conserved in a vacuum-sealed tin. Delight *your* guests with this extra-flavour, 100% pure coffee. "Good to the last drop."

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Ask your Shoe Repairer—he is best qualified to fit SUSSEX. His advice will be to have SUSSEX fitted to new shoes from the start—because then your shoes will wear twice as long, retaining their original style and fit.

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1. **Does not irritate skin.**
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4. **Pure, white, greaseless, vanishing.**
5. **No waiting to dry. Can be used right after shaving.**

Arrid *2/8 a jar.* Supplies are very limited, of course, but they are being distributed as fairly as possible. You'll have to keep your weather-eye open for Arrid—but it's worth looking for.

DOES LIVER MAKE YOU GROW?

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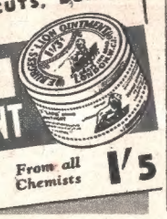
Soothes the pain whilst it heals in the natural way. The proved family remedy for **BOILS, CARBUNCLES, SEPTIC WOUNDS, ABSCESSES, IMPETIGO, CUTS, BURNS.**



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August 1946: King Michael of Rumania accepts a light from Red Army General Susiacov. Seventeen months later (right) Michael Hohenzollern goes into exile with his mother, Princess Helen, whose ex-king relatives include her father, uncle, brother, former husband and son

THAT'S A KING—THAT WAS

by CLAUD MORRIS

In Europe kings seem to be going out of fashion. Yet our own throne stands firmer than ever. What are the prospects of the monarchs—the displaced ones, the ruling ones?

WHEN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS debated the wisdom of paying Princess Elizabeth £40,000 a year there was one marked thing about the debate—every speaker (with the exception of Mr. Gallacher) announced a firm belief that the Monarchy was here to stay.

Yet when I watched the Royal wedding procession an old lady beside me pointed to the cavalcade of kings who had come from foreign parts. "I bet that's the last time we'll see the likes of them all together in their best clothes," she said.

Forty days later King Michael of Rumania (for one) had abdicated. It is a sign of the times that his mother, who accompanied him into exile, has, in her lifetime, seen her father (Tino of Greece), her uncle (the ex-Kaiser), her brother (George of Greece), her former husband (Carol of Rumania) and her son (Michael) driven from their thrones.

The kings from foreign parts are on the skids. They are on the way out, never perhaps to reappear. To answer the question of why the days of foreign kings are nearly over, while the British King sits tight on his throne, take a look at the foreign monarchies.

They consist of five types today—the poor kings, the lonely kings, the kings in hot water, the kings who are kept up the sleeve for a diplomatic purpose, and the feudal kings who are a couple of hundred years behind the times.

First, take a poor king. A year ago in Switzerland I saw Peter of Jugoslavia, who has been put out of business by Mr. Tito. Peter, walking with his handsome wife, looked nervous. And why not? Four out of nine of his predecessors were assassinated. At an early age he knew what it was to lose a father by political murder, to be double-crossed by an uncle, and to disagree with a premier.

Like all the fallen kings, he has been a pawn in the political game. Goering went to see him in 1935, gave him an electric train, and knelt on the carpet to demonstrate it. That was about the equivalent to Molotov going to Buckingham Palace to give a young Princess Elizabeth a doll's house. It couldn't happen here. We'd never allow it.

As a result of the political game played so steadily by his relatives, King Peter can today hardly command a brace of secretaries. His destiny? I do not think he has any—beyond eking out the remaining years of his life in Monaco or among the international set at St. Moritz.

Now take a lonely king, Shah Mohammed Riza of Persia. He lives in the huge and costly Gulistan Palace in Teheran. Some hundreds of miles away are the great British and American oil refineries from which he draws his millions. He eats his food from golden plates. Yet even today there are peasants who lie down and die outside the palace gates, and perfumed Persian officials kick their bodies into the gutters.

He married a woman who had the face and body of a great beauty, Princess Fawzia. But her pictures have been removed from the gold frames on his desk and she has fled to Egypt. He dare not divorce her for fear of political repercussions—she is the sister of the King of Egypt.

He sits alone among his shooting guns, with little to do, wondering perhaps when time will change an ignorant and hungry rabble into a screaming mob; at night looking northward over the Persian hills, to where the Russian tanks manoeuvre and the soldiers of the Red Star wait.

Will the Shah survive? I give him five troubled years of loneliness, and then the choice of all foreign kings—assassination or exile.

Now take a king in hot water—King Paul of Greece, where all hell rages. Out of six prewar monarchies in central and south-eastern Europe, his is the only one left. Eighteen months ago the royalist chant, "*Eh eh erchetai*" ("He is coming"), echoed through the streets of Athens for Paul's predecessor, George. Today Paul just keeps his head above the political waves. He enjoys little personal popularity. The Greeks who backed the monarchy because they feared a republic might fall prey to Communism have forgotten Paul. And, according to the frightened right wingers, the Communists are almost (figuratively) knocking on the palace door with .303 bullets.

The length of his stay is anybody's guess. But the crown that plays a political role in Greece sits on a shaking head.

Now take another king—one kept up the sleeve

for a diplomatic purpose. Don Juan, Count of Barcelona, still waits half-confidently to be called back to the throne of Spain. Quite a typical specimen of a European monarch, Juan has the gift the best of them need if they are to keep their heads intact—he is many kinds of things to many kinds of people.

To an American he may nod quiet acquiescence about the wickedness of Franco. To the Spanish Ambassador he may send his fond regards to Spain's "fine and Christian gentleman."

During the Spanish war Juan tried to volunteer for Franco's troops, went to church and prayed for Franco's victory. He felt Franco was his best bet, but he is still waiting. Supporting him inside Spain, the wealthy landed aristocrats have lined up pretty solidly. Among the generals around Franco his influence is said to be spreading. As for the ordinary people of Spain, their sentiments do not yet count much. Once the people take a heavy defeat, as they did in the Spanish Civil War, the hangover of demoralization lasts a long time.

Like many European kings in exile, Juan is related to England. One of his second cousins is Earl Mountbatten, who holds the distinction of being cousin or second cousin of most of the monarchs alive today.

Juan's Case is a Warning

Before Juan, the Spanish kings suffered from the weakness of so many kingships, in-breeding. The Bourbons became decadent after centuries of inter-marriage. Two of Juan's brothers died of haemophilia. The third brother has it and, furthermore, was born deaf and dumb.

It is just possible that Juan *might* return to Spain. But I do not think so; neither do I think he would last unless propped up on a pair of crutches by the Roman Catholic Church. The warning of Juan to all kings, present and future, is simple and twofold: Do not in-breed too much; it weakens the strength of the throne and leads to decadence. Do not play the political game; you will defeat yourself.

Enough, now, of the kings who have lost or are losing the fight for their thrones. I turn to a king who has no need to fight. Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia lives in an ideal kingly state, feudalism. His kingdom may yet live for many centuries.

This dominant figure of the Middle East is the most powerful absolute monarch on earth. He is sixty-eight, half blind. He has forty sons and untold wealth. Ironically, he gets his wealth from the Americans and British, who plan to run their war fleets on his oil. He has the power of life and death over five million subjects.

Yet Ibn Saud has the secret of kingship. He is benevolent to the Arabs he rules. I am told by someone who saw him recently that he is the most accessible king on earth—a beggar, provided he has a purpose, may see him. Ibn Saud may not live like his people, but he lives with them.

When, the other day, he was invited to meet American dignitaries, he politely refused to occupy the proferred guest house, and spent the night, guarded by desert tribesmen, in a six-room tent. He remains unpolluted by outside interference, and he is just as capable of spitting in the eye of a Russian as in the eye of an American or a Briton. Ibn Saud has the feudal form of guts that does not breed so easily in cities, and does not take to sophisticated Western women near the throne. I rather like the look of him.

George VI as a Man

Now leave the foreigners to their varied fates. Take an example of a useful king—George of England. Sir Louis Greig, the counsellor and guide of the sons of George V, said to a friend at the time of the abdication: "He will be a slow starter like his father. But he has courage and he will be a stayer. He will be in the race when a lot of the flashier ones will have dropped out."

What kind of man is he? A lot of nonsense is written about him and his royal family. Newspaper stories about the King and his Princesses existing on their clothing coupon books, for instance, while, in fact, they have a necessary royal wardrobe of considerable dimensions.

There are too many "naice" stories about royalty. So I will tell you a different sort. Some time ago I met Camillien Houde, the man who hated Britain. Houde is a colourful rebel with a Technicolor vocabulary. He is Mayor of Montreal, Canada's biggest French-speaking city. He startles visitors by the obscenity of his language.

In 1939, asked to play host to King George on his royal tour, he asked: "But how, *how* can I control my language?" The night before the banquet Houde wrote himself a list of words he must not use. He kept the list by his soup plate. He made laboured conversation with the King on his right and the Queen on his left.

The Queen caught sight of the paper to which Houde constantly referred. She asked what it was. Confused, Houde let the paper slip beneath the table, but the Queen caught it in her napkin. Houde covered his huge face in his hands.

The Queen smiled, blushed, then passed the list to her husband. The King read through the list of thirty swear words and burst out laughing. The dismay vanished from Houde's face. Nervous tension at that banquet disappeared. When the King left Montreal the man who hated Britain became the only known ruling mayor to embrace a ruling monarch.

In the council chambers of Montreal you can still hear criticism against Britain. But never a word against the King who can laugh with the man who hated Britain.

Now turn your eyes west to Ottawa. I know Mackenzie King, Prime Minister of Canada, who is retiring this year. His record in world affairs was not always inspiring. For years he seemed to be an isolationist, refusing to commit his country to come to Britain's aid in the event of war.

The change in Mackenzie's attitude toward the outside world began in 1937. As a strong Canadian nationalist and a hater of old British imperialism, he went to the Coronation in London and stayed on for the Imperial Conference.

There an interesting thing happened to him. He had come over from Canada a stranger to the Royal Family. To his amazement he found himself received by the new king like a member of the family, like a wise old uncle come to visit from overseas.

Mackenzie went back with a new vision. As the European sky darkened, he began to talk of helping Britain. He startled former isolationist friends with a new doctrine: if Britain is at war, Canada is at war, and subject to attack.

Servant of the People

I was with the Canadian Army in that war. And sometimes when we lifted our glasses to the King over the water we thought of the other crowned heads who were still waited on, furred, jewelled and warmed—but never knew their job.

The King of England, alone, united a commonwealth of people then who had nothing else but a crown to bind them. Why does he succeed where others have failed? There are four good reasons:

1. The institution he upholds is bigger than the man. This was shown by the abdication crisis. The King in Britain is servant of the people.

2. He is above politics. Politicians scrap, Prime Ministers come and go. But the man who watches the political drama from the Royal Prompter's Box stretches out a friendly hand to all parties.

3. As the years advance, he is emulating George V, and becoming more and more the father of a far-flung people who share a common idea about the way of life they lead.

4. In an age of shifting standards, he represents the stable things in Britain. His wife has given us a pleasant legend of motherhood and family life in a time when moral values have so often been lost.

In a day when religion has faced its greatest decline, George VI exemplifies something more than religious faith and churchgoing; he gives us more than faith in God. By some queer chemistry of monarchy and its effect on the British, I think he is helping us to believe in ourselves.

Let's Have a New Deal for DAUGHTERS

by *ANNE BLYTHE*

Parental ties still condemn many women to spinsterhood. Homes for the aged may help to ease the burden. But the problem will not be solved until parents themselves drop the idea that "mother must come first"

John Bull photograph by William Kemp

"I didn't have children as an insurance for my old age": Anne Blythe and her young family. Left to right they are: Anne, aged six; Ailsa, eight; Marsaili, three; and Alison, four

A MONTH AGO I SENT OFF a wedding present. After a seven years' engagement, an old school friend was going abroad to be married. The other day, to my amazement, it came back to me, with a little note from the bride to say simply that the marriage was "off." She wouldn't be sailing at the end of the month after all. Her mother had refused to leave England, and she was staying at home to look after her. Obviously it was the least she could do as a daughter, but John in Canada didn't understand about British family ties.

Just that. An ordinary enough tale. The sort of minor tragedy that happens every day. You could even dismiss it with the remark that it was just as well to find out differences of opinion before marriage, and that, with such a lack of understanding, they probably wouldn't have been happy anyway.

I know this girl. I know a handful of others like her; and it's all much worse than that. It's another example of a bad old custom we have inherited from our Victorian grandparents and never shaken off—the sacrifice of the young to the old. The duty of the single daughter to put her elderly parents' comfort before her own happiness; the cruel claim that mother must come first.

If you imagined all that went out with antimacassars and Marie Corelli, take a look down any suburban street and you'll find at least a couple of examples. It's still with us, and it may take another dozen years of clear thinking to stamp it out.

You know the sort of thing I mean. It has happened in almost every family in the land at some time or other. As the children grow up and marry, the job of looking after the ageing parents must fall on somebody. Usually it's the youngest daughter or the one who lingers at home longest. Victorian parents, who frankly thought of their children as "investments," deliberately kept one daughter at home so that she could take over the housekeeping from mother. Sometimes, in spite of this, she actually married, but the chances were that it didn't happen until late in life and that she had one or other of her widowed parents to live with her.

But more often, with her wings clipped, she grew into the maiden aunt, slightly soured and narrow in outlook, of which most families can claim at least one. The spinsters of two generations ago weren't the result of men being scarce—for they were not—but of dependent parents being plentiful. We are only beginning to do something constructive about it now.

The new charter for the aged, which will in time provide them with suitable housing, help and increased old age pensions, will do more than give a new deal for the old. It will be a new deal, long overdue in families where money is scarce, for the young as well. For too long youth has been forced by custom and economic circumstances to make heavy sacrifices for the old.

Lowered the Birthrate

The dutiful daughter isn't the only example. There is, just as often, the dutiful son who daren't think of marriage because he is the sole support of his widowed mother and she keeps house for him. How can he leave her alone or bring in a wife to be mistress in her place?

I sometimes wonder how much the lower birthrate of the inter-war years was due to the tradition of family duty to the old. I know of so many men and women who have been unable to marry young because they had parents to look after, and so many more who, once married, had to restrict their family to two children because granny had to have the spare room.

"How could I have had children?" a woman said the other day. "I've always had an invalid father to look after, and Jim has had to make an allowance to his mother. If we'd had children, the old people would have suffered for it."

Nobody, with even the highest sense of duty, would agree that this is right. Many of the aged must have felt that they were burdens on their children. But the creed had been well dinned in. To accept outside help was degrading, but to accept help from your children was right and proper, no matter what the cost to the child. Thus we had family homes with dependent parents in them instead of new babies, and the mother-in-law joke that sounded funny in the music hall but pretty grim at home.

Hitler's "Group" Plan

Although to have parents living-in has been unfortunately common in British homes, I've heard of only one person who favoured the idea as a good plan for living. That was Hitler who, in 1938, appealed to families to save space and labour by living in groups, with all the young people in the factories and all the grannies and maiden aunts doing the domestic work.

Like most of that man's ideas, it was a rotten one. It may be economical but it certainly doesn't make for family happiness. The Arab sage who said "Keep your hearts together but your tents apart" had much more sense.

Now at last a germ of that wisdom has found its way into our national plans for the aged. Not only will higher pensions enable old people to live without leaning on their children, but the new scheme for old people's hotels will ease the strain on thousands of daughters, married and single. If the hotels are modelled on the present hostels for old people run by the National Council of Social Service, they will provide, for twenty-one shillings a week, a normal private hotel life with comfort, companionship and less rules than you find in the average boarding house.

Even if they have nothing but their pension, the residents will still have five shillings a week pocket money and a sense of independence they could never find living with relatives. Bungalows for old couples are being built all over the country, and schemes are already working that provide them with a certain amount of domestic help and special care in illness and incapacity.

Family Customs Die Hard

I know, of course, that in spite of all these plans there will still be parents who consider that their children owe them a duty and that it is only natural for a child to give up the chance of happiness to care for them. I have heard elderly people argue the point heatedly. One wrote to me recently that, in her view, the commandment to "Honour thy father and thy mother" meant simply to put them before all else.

Another, hearing of my friend's broken romance, said that no decent man would expect to *take a daughter away* from an elderly mother. Obviously a parent over sixty had the "right" to the services of one of her children, and prospective husbands should realize it.

No, the idea isn't dead by any means. Some parents still refuse to be independent of their children. Old British family customs die hard.

Some time ago, when my fourth baby daughter was born, an elderly relative wrote to me: "How nice for you! With four girls you can keep one at home to look after you in your old age. It will be very comforting."

It might be, and I daresay to some parents this callous sacrifice of a child's right to live its own life is all right. But I didn't have children as an insurance for my old age, but so that they could live good, useful and happy lives as branches going out from mine. Going *out*, mind you; not turning in to wilt beside the stem.

While my children are young they will lean on me, perhaps pretty heavily. But I pray God I will not have to lean on them in my last years. No modern mother wants *duty* from her children. We do not demand sacrifice.

Instead, we ask something much more valuable—love and honour and *independence*.

THE HUMAN MACHINE by ROFFE THOMPSON

Away From It All

I AM writing this in an aeroplane on my way from Manchester to London. There is a curious air of detachment up here. Human problems seem very remote, and the world seems very lovely. I find myself wondering why, when one gets down to earth, people seem so petty.

We all tend, I think, to concentrate too much on our immediate surroundings, to give far too much thought to our immediate worries.

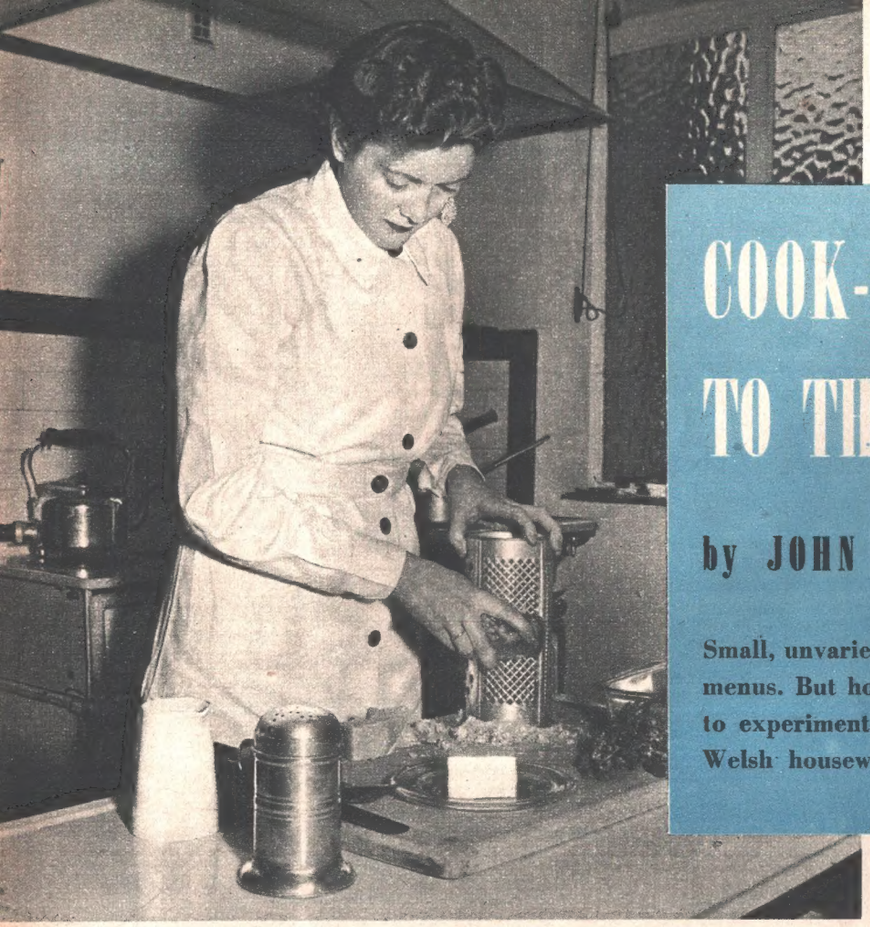
I once knew a famous West End doctor who was fond of prescribing for his patients a long ride on the top of a London bus, in the days when double-deckers had an open top. He used to tell them to get on the first bus they saw and just enjoy the ride and the view. "It's good for the eyes, and it's good for the mind," he used to say.

Just now I'm realizing the wisdom of his prescription. It's good every now and then to achieve somehow or other a complete detachment from everyday life. As the plane flies south, I recall those fine lines of the Tramp Poet, W. H. Davies:

What is this life, if full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare?

Well, here we are at Croydon. We're going to land. In a few minutes I shall have my feet on solid earth, and the problems and the worries will crowd in again.

But for an hour I have had a lesson I shall never forget—a lesson in the value of occasionally just "staring."



Breadcrumbs, margarine, parsley: Mrs. Waskett plans a new recipe in her kitchen "laboratory"

COOK-GENERAL TO THE NATION

by JOHN K. NEWNHAM

Small, unvaried rations call for new menus. But housewives can't afford to experiment. In London a young Welsh housewife does it for them

DOREEN WASKETT, a slim, tilt-nosed, brown-haired young Welshwoman from Rhiwderin, Monmouthshire, is the mind behind the recipes published in the Press and in pamphlet form by the Ministry of Food.

In these days of austere larders, there can be small margin for error in cookery. Housewives can't afford to experiment. So Doreen does it for them. The nation's chief recipe inventor supervises a compact cookery unit in London's West End. She has a staff of six; and technical experts study the dishes before the recipes are passed on to the public.

While catering for all tastes and all types of people, she has to use only the ingredients which are normally available and within the purchasing power of the average housewife. She mustn't rely on the black market, nor on the generosity of the grocer who might pass under-the-counter tit-bits to favoured customers.

"And," she says, "I have got to restrict myself to ingredients which are available in every part of the country *simultaneously*. This means checking up on distribution before any recipe can be published. If just one of the ingredients is not going to be available in any region, that recipe has to be discarded."

Like three other members of her unit Doreen Waskett is a housewife; she has a husband and three other people to cater for in a big house in West London—which means shopping out of office hours. "And," she claims, "I do use my own recipes!" Her husband, Dennis, says they are all tried out on him before they are released to the public. "The nation's food guinea-pig," is how he describes himself.

Close Touch With Housewives

Doreen was a domestic science teacher in Cardiff before the war. She joined the Ministry of Food as a demonstrator, and before long she was organizing the Food Advice Service in South Wales, where she came into very close personal contact with housewives of all classes.

Later she became a technical officer and moved to London, where she took charge of the experimental kitchen. The kitchen is no different from millions of others throughout the country except that it has electricity, gas *and* oil, so that experiments can be made. Otherwise, its only equipment is a small refrigerator, table, sideboard and cupboards.

The unit has three of these kitchens. All were used by private families until the block of flats of which they were a part was taken over by the Ministry. When a recipe has been worked out, it is taken to one of the kitchens, where it is made up.

It is then passed over to a tasting panel—one or two technical people and six to eight "outsiders."

Tasters Try it First

Members of the staff, liftmen, porters, doormen, clerks and any visitors who happen to be about are likely to be called in; they are always quite ordinary people, of both sexes.

If they don't like the dish, the recipe is scrapped. If they do, it is passed to a second kitchen to see how they make it up there. This second effort goes to another tasting panel, similarly composed.

Only then, after it has been tasted twice, and checked for its nutritional value and the availability of the ingredients, does the public get the recipe.

"I have to think of what will be in season in three months' time," Doreen Waskett says. "Then I have to find out whether the ingredients will actually be on the market and, if not, what substitutes could be used.

"A lot of the recipes go through a great deal of trial and error. I may think of a dish which normally needs rice. What could be used instead of rice? I decide to try barley. The result may be horrid, but if it is successful I feel I've done something."

Sometimes there is a slip. The Cookery Calendar appeared not long ago with a special plum pudding calling for eight ounces of grated, raw potato, on the very day that potato rationing was announced. Doreen's kitchens produced a "flash" alternative—soaked and squeezed bread crusts instead of potato.

Alternative recipes must always be ready in case of any sudden shortage. And recipes also have to be worked out to coincide with the announcement of food changes. Prices and points values must be borne in mind the whole time.

Breakfast, says Doreen, is the most hopeless meal of all. It is the greatest problem for nearly all housewives. There is very little that can be done about it at present. "So," she says, "my job is to concentrate on main dishes. They have to be substantial and tasty. But I do try to work in one 'flip-up' dish in every 'Cookery Calendar'—something that will help to brighten life a little bit. Of course, we get accused of issuing extravagant recipes when we do this!"

Worst headache is naturally the shortage of fats. We have always relied very largely on fried foods; even after all these lean years we have not got used to fatless cooking. This is why so little advantage is taken of fish. We just don't like it unless it is fried.

The sugar position is not so bad today. Many people have learned to do without it in their tea; housewives mix it with saccharine in dishes.

Eating Habits Need Changing

Doreen Waskett thinks that the biggest difficulty of all is breaking down traditional habits. "It can't be done. People simply won't take their meat in three little pieces during the week. I would like a small family of three, say, to take a small breast of lamb on one ration book early in the week, a pound of minced meat on another ration book later in the week, and then another ration on the third book at the end of the week.

"Planning could provide a far greater variety of meals this way, but people won't do it. They like the biggest possible joint at the weekend.

"Another problem is that people have never used a sufficient variety of seasonings and flavourings. Sage, salt, pepper and mustard, and that's all. Thousands and thousands of housewives have never even heard of paprika, cloves and many other seasonings which can make meals appetising. Or they are afraid to use them."

The experimental kitchen deals with many housewives direct. They write in for special recipes; perhaps they have been able to buy some ingredients not available generally. Or perhaps they've had a food parcel from overseas, containing goods which thousands of young housewives have never even seen. Doreen Waskett works out recipes for them all. The steady mailbag of requests shoots up sharply whenever rationing changes are announced.

Women often send in their own suggestions. These are frequently useful, but, says Doreen, they're not always very easy to follow. Many housewives have odd methods of working out quantities. "So we get something like 'a pinch of this, an ounce of that, a cup of so-and-so.' With no set standard, we have to try to fathom out just how much a pinch is, what a cupful really represents, and what a spoonful or a handful really stands for."

Daren't Have Favourite Dishes

The scope of the experimental kitchen, which was begun by Lord Woolton in 1940, extends from planning for restaurants and schools, to special recipes for hospitals.

Doreen Waskett's own favourite dishes? "I daren't have them!" she says. She simply shares with all her public an ambition to be able to create meals without wondering whether the ingredients are going to be available.

"Now," she invited, after we had been chatting for quite a time, "let's go back to the kitchen and have something to eat."

We did. And now I know what's cookin' three months ahead of the rest of you. It's nutritious, it's delicious: but don't ask me for the recipe. Doreen is keeping mum. The ingredients may not be available for all of you then!

THE STONE OF CONTENTION

by ELIZABETH BERRIDGE

ILLUSTRATED BY E. RATCLIFF

Most fishermen are superstitious. But was Morgan really afraid of the stone—or was he just a good fisherman telling a good story?

WE WERE OUT FISHING one afternoon, Morgan and I, and as we slung down our bait and rods I seized the opportunity for a few words before the afternoon's silence set in.

"Morgan," I said, "why do you never go farther down the river? We would be in the shade then." I spoke regretfully, for the sun was already hot on my neck and I knew by the afternoon's end it would be agony even to bend my head back to see the cranes flying into the sunset.

"No fish there," said Morgan, looking to where I pointed. "No good ever came of fishing there."

"Why?" I asked. It annoyed me that the old man should be so positive. It was one of his characteristics. Wearily he rose to his feet. "Come with me," he said. We walked along the flat, steep bank of the river and stopped at the tree whose shade I had envied.

"Look," he said, and gestured. The bank there was a good four feet above the level of the water and a little way out I saw the shifting outlines of a huge rock, sunk well below the level of the river.

"Well?" I asked.

"No fish'll stay near that stone," said Morgan. "Salmon jump over it as if the Devil is on their tail. Even pike won't shelter under it. No. Best get back." He was shaking his head as he stamped along ahead of me. I hesitated, wondering if he was serious; then I saw the highest leap of any salmon I've come across, and I've fished in more than one river. It arched itself in the sun and shot back into the water the up-river side of the sunken rock with a lightning flicker of its tail and was gone.

I went slowly back to Morgan.

"That's funny," I said.

He grinned. "It's all that," he said. "Although you won't find the youngsters think that way. Maybe they'll learn. . . ."

"If you spoke quietly," I suggested, "you might tell me about it."

MORGAN glanced at me and laughed, then lighted his pipe. "You know my maxim," he said. "Fish or talk. Talk or fish. Well, we'll talk a bit. Too hot for them to rise just yet."

It certainly was. And how I would have loved to be just beneath the surface of the water. Just out of the sun.

Morgan was the eighth generation to be born in the house where he was rearing five of the ninth. So when he said "Back in my great-grandfather's day——" you could be sure that a piece of Montgomeryshire history would follow; maybe not the sort that gets between covers, but good, sound legendry all the same.

At once I laid down my rod and, with a handkerchief knotted over my head, listened carefully.

"Before the church was built in the village," he went on, nodding to a thin spire which cut the afternoon heat above the distant bridge, "that stone you saw was on the highest piece of ground——"

"Where the cemetery begins on the hill——" I interrupted.

"That's right," said Morgan. He looked at me, then drew at his pipe. After a moment he continued.

"Well, it was the custom in those days for the lad who imagined himself to be the strongest in the valley to challenge the rest of the lads from his own village and all the villages round. He would get up on that stone and throw out his chest—like a cock on a dunghill, you might say.

"Mind you, it wasn't only for strength. In those days men were proud of their ploughing, and there'd be arguments as to who could drive the straightest furrow or who the girls loved most—anything'd do to make 'em get up on that old stone boasting. Sometimes the fights were friendly, other times a head or two got broken. Sometimes there was worse bloodshed. But the girls encouraged it—they almost fought amongst themselves to honour the victor—and there wasn't much else for the men to do but show off their prowess.

"But when the population increased and the church was built, the old stone was not much used. It was too near the church for comfort. Not that the vicars objected; at least, until my father's day they didn't.

"THE trouble came when the cemetery grew bigger and started creeping up the hill. Well, the vicar at the time knew the stone's reputation and started agitating to have it moved. That made things hum, and in the way people have the lads started taking a lively interest in it again. Every evening, so my father told me, that old stone was the scene of real devilry—fights and squabbling, and the girls shrieking. And the older folk arguing who was for moving it and who was not.

"Well, the vicar did a courageous thing. He went to the deacons of the chapel at the far end of the village and asked for their co-operation. They gave it, but even they could get no one to move the stone, and the graves were gradually coming up nearer. The stone looked like a triumphant grave itself—or rather vault, and there's no denying it crowned the churchyard well—but it wasn't the sort of crown that was wanted for consecrated ground.

"The vicar was a good man, I think, and he was in despair (maybe he thought his end would come before it was moved and he would be condemned to lie forever just by the stone with the cries of the combatants above him) until a cottager named Thomas Davies, a newcomer from another valley, volunteered to cart it away for a pound.

"There were sour looks as he set off for the churchyard, and not one person came forward to help him tip the great thing on to his cart. But do it he did, and away the cart rolled, leaving the vicar well

"Every evening that old stone was the scene of real devilry"

pleased and a deep hole with brown rats and woodlice swarming and running from the sun.

"Well, Thomas Davies had to decide where he could dump it, so he went off home to think about it over his dinner. He drove the cart into his yard and left it there. In the middle of dinner his wife, a sharp-edged woman, so they say, came running in with a scold on her tongue. She was in a terrible state. She used the yard for keeping cocks and hens, and in a paddock off it was her cow.

"When poor Thomas got into the yard everything was in an uproar; the cocks were fighting, the hens were flying about pecking each other, the dog had got in among them and was after the cat, the cows were lowing from the field and the horse rearing like a mad thing, held down by the stone, on which the cocks were strutting angrily, feathers out and combs blood-red.

"His wife ran at him while he stood there. She waved her apron all round the yard, then turned on Thomas. 'It's that old stone!' she shouted, almost in tears. 'You shouldn't have touched it. The Welsh know something about it—trust them!' For Thomas's wife was a Shropshire woman.

"Now she pushed him into the driver's seat and told him to drive off with the stone—to the river, anywhere, so long as she never saw it again. . . .

"So Thomas left his dinner, shooed off the cocks and drove through the crazy birds into the road. 'The river, Thomas!' he heard his wife shout. But distance mends all things, and behind him the noise gradually died down. Even the wind brought him no sound of the woman's scolding voice.

"When he had tipped the stone into the river—it was deeper in those days—he went off back to the vicar to get his money and to tell what had been done with it. The vicar was delighted. He had already filled in the hole on the hill and insisted that Thomas should take him to see the unholy thing. 'The people will get over it,' he said as they came to the riverside.

"'Foolish they are,' said Thomas, no doubt crisping the note in his pocket. 'What a fuss about an old stone. But it's safe enough here.' He turned to walk back with the vicar, but his foot slipped on to the bank, where his horse, straining and backing with the weight of the stone, had trodden up the grass. He fell from the high bank, and the vicar ran back in time to see his head hit the stone which lay just under the surface of the water. It wasn't a great fall, only four feet or so. But Thomas Davies was dead as the stone itself."

Morgan gazed down the river and was silent.

"And the vicar?" I asked.

"Nothing happened to him," said Morgan. "Only no one would go to his church after that, and at last he had to go. Upset him proper, and his sermons fell to pieces, so my father said. He wasn't so sure about things as he had been." He nodded towards the stone.

"They call it the pool of Thomas Davies," he said. "Of course, it's sunk a lot in the last fifty years or so. They do say that fishermen part bad friends if they sit by it."

"And it *is* unlucky?" I asked, imagining that fall from the steep bank, the crack and the silent death.

"Unlucky for some," said Morgan. Then he cast his line into the water with terrific speed as a salmon came leaping up-river through the pool of Thomas Davies. They were forced to leap, I noticed; the stone blocked the river.

He played that fish beautifully, but I had no heart to cast in my line. As he landed it he turned to me and grinned.

"Unlucky for some, lucky for others," he said. "Work it out for yourself."

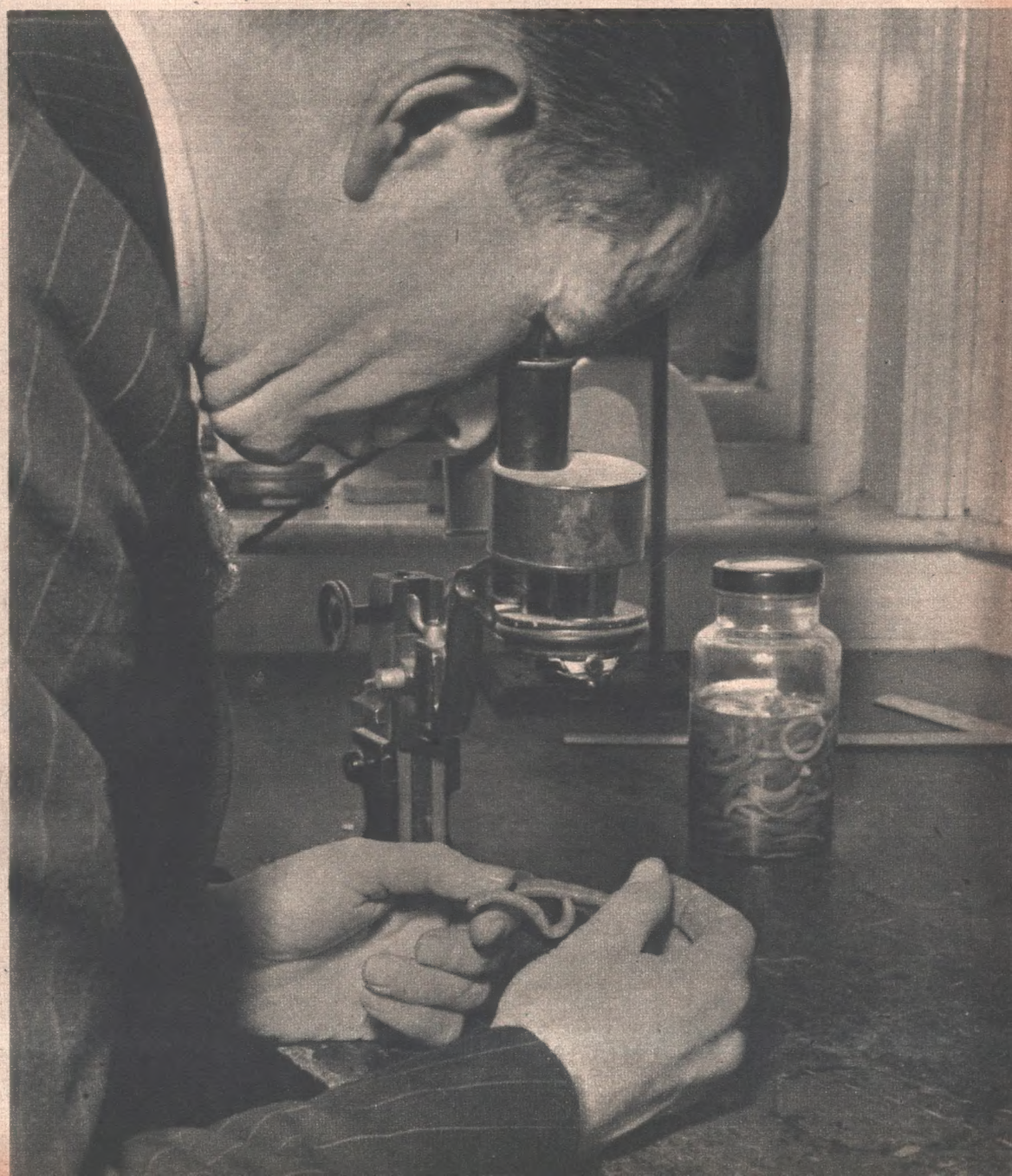
BOFFINS WITH MUD ON THEIR

From their back rooms scientists have come to the front in Britain's production drive. This final article on the vital rôle of our peacetime Boffins describes the work of the men who are bent on growing two rations where one grew before

STARTING POINT OF OUR current adversities is one hard, simple fact: we live on an island not nearly big enough to feed us. And before a fact like that even wonder-working science might be expected to quail.

Can science make the sun shine longer or multiply the number of our fields? Is it, in fact, much use at all when we get down to bedrock?

For your answer just take the case of the scrawny jungle fowl which laid a score or so of eggs a year. Then compare it with its descendant, the industrious modern hen, laying perhaps two hundred. A cow, in nature, gives two hundred gallons of milk a year. A dairy cow may give one thousand. And the tough wild boar the Norman lords used to hunt bears about as much relation to our own



BOOTS . . . by HARRY HOPKINS

docile bacon-producer as Wilbur Wright's biplane to a Flying Fortress. Such advances are a measure of what applied science can do.

It was not till the eighteenth century that Britain gave Nature a great push forward when "gentlemen farmers" like Bakewell of Leicestershire and Coke of Norfolk started to shape the famous breeds of farm animals which have since stocked the world.

Towards a World of Plenty

Now, with the development of twentieth-century science, the intuition of enthusiastic amateurs is giving place to the systematic investigations of hundreds of specialists. In laboratories and testing grounds throughout Britain these Boffins with mud on their boots are slowly bringing into focus a new world of plenty.

At Aberystwyth they've developed new grasses, bringing thousands of acres of barren hillsides back into cultivation. At East Malling, Kent, they've worked out a method of hormone spraying which stops fruit falling off trees. At the Reading Dairy Institute they've been experimenting with a synthetic powder that vastly increases the milk yield of cows—and even with a method of making cows yield milk without calves.

Rothamsted's place is special and unique. There the great tradition of Britain's "gentlemen farmers" joins hands with the most fundamental inquiries of twentieth-century science.

Rothamsted's story started 140 years ago, soon after a young Hertfordshire landowner, John Bennet Lawes, came down from Oxford. Lawes, who had been studying the work of the German pioneer of organic chemistry, Liebig, found himself looking at the mild countryside of his native county with new eyes.

He realized there was a lot more to the "good earth" than you could learn by just crumbling it between your fingers. He decided that at Rothamsted they would really get to *know* about soil. He engaged a chemist and startled the neighbourhood by turning the family estate of 250 acres into an experimental farm. In 1843 they fixed up the first rough-and-ready laboratory in a barn.

Field That's a Testing Ground

Today if you walk up the lane that slopes gently from the little Hertfordshire town of Harpenden you will come suddenly upon a handsome Renaissance edifice. Through the wide windows you get glimpses of glass tubing and balances, and men and women in white coats—some of the large staff of physicists, chemists, microbiologists, botanists, entomologists, plant pathologists, at work delving into the mysteries of the soil.

Behind and beyond the laboratories lies the farm, a farm like no other. There's a field there, Broadbalk, which has been growing wheat continuously for over a hundred years. It's an odd-looking field—divided into seventeen elongated half-acre strips. Each receives a different fertilizer. And down the years the crop record books have piled up the evidence and ushered world agriculture into a new epoch.

Dr. W. G. Ogg, Rothamsted's director, is a cheery, energetic little Scot, a farmer's son from Aberdeen. I asked him what his agricultural Boffins could do for us in our crisis. He answered at once.

"That 100,000,000 pounds worth of extra food the Government's asking for?" he said. "If we've proved anything at all at Rothamsted we've proved that farmers can get that extra twenty per cent just by making fuller and better use of lime and fertilizers."

The needs of every soil are different. At Rothamsted they're perfecting methods of soil analysis which will tell the full story of those needs as swiftly and accurately as possible. Then they're working to discover just which fertilizers will satisfy them. As soon as you start to use a fertilizer you come up against intricate problems — when it should be put in, whether it is going to damage the soil structure or interfere with the germination of the seed.

"You know," said Dr. Ogg, "it's awfully tempting when you get a good result to say 'This is it,' and publish. But the farmer can't afford to take any risks. He has to live with his results for a year at least. We have to be certain." And that means years of field experiments, checking and re-checking on the findings of the laboratory. Rothamsted maintains a team of trained research men equipped to go off to organize trials and check results wherever they're needed.

The big windows in the director's office look out over acres of ploughed land falling away toward the town—Harpenden Common. The oldest inhabitant couldn't remember anything ever having been grown on the common before. But when war came Rothamsted's chemists took soil specimens, worked out their precise deficiencies, determined what could be done about them. And now here was Harpenden Common producing valuable crops.

Dr. Ogg believes there's still plenty of other land in this country that, with modern methods, could just as easily be put into production. Perhaps increasing the size of our island isn't so impossible after all.

I left his office and made for the Entomological Division's home in Rothamsted Lodge. There I met the earthworm men.

Dr. Evans and Dr. Guild have been on earthworms for three years now. Their assignment was to substitute fact for fancy, to assess the evidence about earthworms and bring in a scientific verdict.

One of their first jobs was to organize a sort of worm census. Since worms can dive six feet a minute and are therefore not easy to dig up, the plan was to take watering cans of permanganate of potash and pour it over square-yard plots on various parts of the farm. This brought the worms rushing to the surface, to be picked up, counted, identified, and preserved in formalin. Some fifteen different species—and a new one—were discovered.

Worms Without End

Next task was to check on worm activity. Every four days the worm men would trudge out to their plots on the farm and collect up all the worm casts there. The worm casts were taken back to the laboratory to be dried and weighed. It was found that on an acre of pastureland the worms throw up eleven tons of earth a year. For worms not only live in the soil, they consume it. This raised the crucial question: what effect did they have on soil fertility?

The worm men set up a number of "pot experiments" in their laboratory. Into three different soil mixtures they introduced (1) no worms, then (2) about the same quantity of (*a*) live and (*b*) dead worms as would be found in an equivalent amount of good pastureland.

For three and a half months the worms did their stuff and then they were removed—and any pot in which more than one living worm had died was rejected. Then spinach beet was sown in the soil. Result: living worms had no effect; the dead ones increased the yield. But, not so fast! When the trials were repeated with a different species of worm, quite different results emerged. The plot thickened!

The attack was switched to another front. Cocoons of twelve species of worms were selected and a study started of the worm's life-cycle, through growth and sexual maturity to death. This is still going on—because so far the worms have shown a certain obstinacy about dying.

You need plenty of patience to be a good Boffin. "You see," says Evans, "we're only just at the beginning of this problem. It'll be twenty years before we can assess the results properly. . . ."

Boffins Are Slow—But Sure

Twenty years—and after that truth, when it comes up from the bottom of the test tubes, may or may not be useful. But it will be the truth—and that to a Boffin is the important thing. It will have speeded the long and difficult process of going into partnership with Nature to banish hunger from the world.

Boffins are unsensational people, slow, methodical, deliberate. But the great thing about them, in our present situation, is that they are not overimpressed by the word "can't." Given the chance, they're very apt to get there in the end.

And today in Britain our survival depends on their getting that chance.

Plans are on foot to double the output of scientists. The "Red Brick" universities of the provinces—snubbed and starved of funds for years—are coming into their own. The technical colleges are getting a new status. Even so it will be a decade before the research structure now building can be fully manned. This raises a question. Is it right that half our scientific manpower should be earmarked for the refinement of instruments of destruction?

For there is no time to lose. The road between the laboratories and the workshops must be opened up—both ways—and kept open. Prejudice, conservatism, secrecy for private gain must go.

Britain must give the Boffins a free hand to rejuvenate our old industries, to create new ones, to make two rations grow where one grew before.

If we can do that, as we stand at the dawn of the Atomic Age; if we can bring the full power of our scientific brains to bear throughout the length and breadth of industry, then, depend on it, we shall surprise both ourselves and the world.

Sir Henry Tizard is No. 1 peacetime Boffin. He directs a research team which is applying laboratory results to the needs of farm and of factory

Boffin's view of a worm at Rothamsted. Once it's known how worms affect soil, fertility might be increased. That would mean more food

John Bull photograph by William Kemp

. . . BUT IT

That nice British sense of compromise applies even to undress variety. Continental fripperies are frowned on at the Windmill. Patrons may goggle, but wolfish whistles just aren't done. And the girls? Singing and dancing are important; parents can see for themselves; and stage-door crashers are deftly sorted out

THE THEATRE IS SMALL and, of its 312 seats, the 110 upstairs at 10s. 6d. are, although cheaper, the last to be occupied. The customers queue, not for the wide perspective from the circle, but for the more expensive and specialized close-up from the stalls. They are overwhelmingly male. They are forbidden to use opera glasses.

The song-and-dance numbers alternate with sketches, ballets and patter by comics who, despite the traditions of such forerunners as John Tilley and Eric Barker, too often discover that the audience is sitting on its hands even though its eyes are ready to pop out on stalks. Some of the comics aren't at all bad. But such incidentals are not what the customers have come to see; no number has to be endured for more than seven minutes. Sooner or later the girls will be back again dancing in audacious costumes or semi-transparent draperies; posing in nothing at all.

For this is the Windmill, the little theatre in the little street off Piccadilly Circus, London, where non-stop revue has flourished for sixteen years, 210 editions and 22,740 performances. Its dialogue may not be up to top West End standards; it may fall short in production values and star-names. But it does offer Britain's only permanent public display of partial and complete nudity — even if only in small doses and with subdued lighting.

Every large capital has some form of "displayed" show. London's succeeds in remaining triumphantly British while going, at times, completely naked. It remembers that it is providing entertainment for the race which has always been embarrassed by the legend that its ancestors wore little more than woad, the race which until not so long ago used to shroud the legs of pianos in frilly pantalettes.

So Different from Paris

Here you will find no raucous strip-tease on American burlesque lines, none of the frank interest in the perambulating female figure which brings customers to the Folies-Bergère, Paris. Wolfish whistles are discouraged by a coolness which does not spring only from the scanty draperies of the English Misses. Their upper works may be clad in nothing but gauze or net with a couple of adequately placed posies; yet their aloofness could not be greater if they had suddenly encountered the individual members of the audience unintroduced at a village tea-party.

As for those who wear nothing at all—the statues and bookends and candelabra—they stand transfixed in those same artistic poses that are practised every day in Grecian draperies by the pupils of hundreds of British dancing teachers—in Southgate or Streatham or Buckhurst Hill; in Leeds or Glasgow or Cardiff. One reason why the total nudes remain stationary in the subdued lighting is because the Lord Chamberlain's Department won't let them walk about. But, even if permission were granted, one feels that the girls would still not move.

Yet their public is large enough to keep the theatre open from noon until nearly eleven at night, presenting six shows a day, six days a week, to an average daily audience of twelve to thirteen hundred. That the customers are attracted by the English version of stage undress is proved by the past history of the theatre.

In 1931, Mrs. Laura Henderson, widow of a rich

Anita D'Ray (left) and Toni Leighton await stage call. There's glamour but no nonsense

John Bull Colour Photographs by William Kemp

'S ALL SO BRITISH

by DENNIS HOLMAN

Calcutta jute merchant, hired Vivian Van Damm to manage the Palais de Luxe Cinema in Great Windmill Street. Van Damm had spent a varied career in the garage and cinema business, with side ventures into news theatres and speedway tracks. He had introduced bucket seats to Liverpool's cinemas during the first World War, before he was arrested, in 1917, for avoiding conscription. (He was released when it was found that he had previously volunteered and served for three and a half months as an M.T. instructor, but had been discharged as a chronic asthmatic.)

He had screened, in 1918, at the Polytechnic in Regent Street, London, an early social document on venereal disease called *The End of the Road*. He had played some part, during the next few years, in developing sound effects to jack up the silent film productions of those days: during *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* a man backstage hit a drum every time cannon flashed on the horizon; in *The White Sister* a waterfall became articulate with the help of oxygen escaping from a cylinder.

He had managed several of London's West End cinemas, including the Tivoli, the Scala and the Empire. He had started work at fourteen and a half —when he likes showgirls to begin—but just before he went to work for Laura Henderson he was broke.

Turn of the Tide

Mrs. Henderson had bought the Palais de Luxe Cinema and tried to run it as an intimate theatre, with discouraging results. She wanted Van Damm to help her turn the theatre back into a cinema, but within a year they had introduced non-stop revue. For five years Revudeville failed to pay its way. In those five years Laura Henderson lost £20,000. Only in 1937 did the show begin to make a profit; Van Damm had taken over production himself and begun the development of his specially British form of strip technique. The Windmill has never lost money since. All through the war it remained open, cashing in on the patronage of transient G.I.s and entering a boom period which still continues — with a paying sideline in the sale of pin-ups and souvenirs.

Costume designer Phyllis Dexter fits out Jill Anstey. Dress must conform to rules

Before Laura Henderson died in 1944, aged eighty-two, she had seen the box office pay £500,000 in entertainment tax. Van Damm was left 20,000 of the Windmill's 22,000 preference shares and complete control of the theatre.

With complete control, he made few changes; the theatre was already essentially his creation. He is the Windmill. Every idea bears his stamp or approval. Only he makes decisions, hires and fires artists, opens office mail or passes payments.

He has a good record with old faithfuls. Johnnie Gale started as a page boy at the Empire in 1929, where Van Damm gave him a chance at the switchboard. Later Johnnie came to the Windmill as assistant electrician. Now he is stage director. Anne Mitelle was Van Damm's first secretary at the Windmill in 1932. She became assistant producer in 1937 and is now also a director of the firm. She casts for each number from the girls available, arranges for the costumes and marshals all the details connected with production.

Maisie Cryer creates the dance routines — about ten are needed for each show. Maisie has been dancing since she was nine. At thirteen she appeared in the Folies Bergère, and at seventeen she was in Ziegfeld's "Glorifying the American Girl." She went to the Windmill in 1935 to arrange dances for just one show; but stayed.

To fifty-three contented performers, Vivian Van Damm is a generous and well-liked autocrat who pays well and provides secure employment all the year round—some girls have been there ten years, though they average about three years. Inevitably they all call him "V.D." He is an impressive and virile fifty-nine, with a dignity that overcasts the familiarity of his teen-agers.

Relatives Watch Rehearsal

For a week before the show goes on, Van Damm, sitting in the third row of the stalls, takes rehearsals with scenery and costumes. He adds his special touches and fixes the lighting. The "still-pose" girls step under arches, drip fur coats. The dancers kick, kneel, split and jiggle. Van Damm, inclined to shout, gets things the way he wants them—and that's the way he knows the customers want them. The full rehearsal is on the Sunday afternoon before the show opens; it is watched by relatives of the cast.

Van Damm himself is a grandfather. One of his daughters looks after him in a Baker Street mansion flat that he uses as little more than a dormitory; weekends he spends with his wife and another daughter in Angmering. Most Sunday nights he returns to town and looks in at his musty office, with its goldfish in square glass tanks. He sits, then, and works in a silence peculiar to deserted churches and theatres.

Pinned in that office is the axiom, *There are no pockets in shrouds*. He had warned Laura Henderson, but she left £246,191. Still, he doesn't have to read that lesson all the time; the writing on the wall is placed behind Van Damm's head.

The girls who help him to make the money work three consecutive shows of eighteen weeks, performing from noon to 10.45 and rehearsing from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on alternate days. This is followed by a complete rest for two and a half weeks, then three and a half weeks of rehearsal for the next production. They are fully paid for both holiday and rehearsal periods.

Split into "A" and "B" companies, they used to share the day, each company playing three shows, until it was discovered that although the theatre was crowded very little money was taken between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. The audience was staying put between the third and fourth performances to compare—as a publicity handout nicely put it — "the performances of the two companies."

Marion Lynde "clocks in." Ben Fuller, the stage doorman, is authority on young men

The stage door is always open—even to the rawest material. Most of the girls turn up as a direct result of pictures and articles in the Press. In their homes they read about the Windmill life, fancied their chances, and got taken on—a process that underlines once again the strange way in which the exotic custom of stage undress has thrust its roots into the ordinary British soil.

In recruiting, Van Damm looks for personality, (he can err: he fired Jean Kent for "not having personality"), good teeth, hair, looks, nice hands—if he blows up it is because of bitten fingernails. Figures must be well developed—not, for this little theatre, as tall as those of the classic showgirl type —but without need of support. His aim is "Not a brassiere on the whole stage," though some of the older and specialized performers—singers and dance leaders—are no less clothed than they would be at the Palladium.

The Girl Who Objected

If a recruit comes up to his expectations, Van Damm will have her groomed in elocution, make-up, deportment and dress-sense. She'll be taught singing and dancing. He pays a minimum of £10 a week. There is no extra inducement for girls to pose in the nude. And as long as they are covered (gauze or net will do for the upper part of the body —or a garland of flowers) the girls may move on the stage. Only one is on record as having objected at the dress parade fourteen days before the production. "Really, V.D.!" she said, "It's unfair to ask me to wear just that!"

"But, darling," V.D. smiled, "I didn't ask you. You're quite at liberty to go where it's warmer."

She went, though she had seen the show before signing her weekly contract. All new girls do. Parents who sign for juniors are invited first to see for themselves.

Van Damm catches them young. Anita D'Ray is still under eighteen. She works fifty-four hours and

gets free medical and dental treatment. She likes her job; started as an *ingénue* at fourteen and a half, almost straight from school. Within a few months she had starlet billing.

On the other hand, Marion Lynde of Chelsea is a twenty-four year old ex-schoolteacher, who has been with the company on and off for four years. Marion edits the Windmill *Camp News*, which recently took a newspaper columnist to task for misrepresenting the English strip-show background:

Oh, Noel Whitcomb, you've started quite a feud
By suggesting that you interviewed us in the nude.
This really isn't true, you know, for within the Windmill walls
We're really quite a modest lot. So our opinion, Noel, falls.

Jill Anstey, more typical again, is twenty-one. She began as an usherette nearly five years ago; now earns £16 a week and lives in Putney with her mother and two other Windmill chorines—Rosalie Witham and Jacque Jennings. Jill is a film fan and lives in the constant hope of being spotted by a film talent scout. Somewhere in the future she intends settling down and having children, but has yet to decide on a husband.

Inevitably Van Damm loses about six girls a year to matrimony. The prospective suitor calls at the stage door and names the girl he would like to meet. She is paged on the public address system which reaches every room and corridor of the Windmill labyrinth, while he waits in Archer Street.

Ben Fuller, at sixty-five, has been presiding at the stage door for thirteen years. He is an authority on both beer and young men. If Ben okays a caller, the girl will invite him to a cup of tea in a canteen alive with chattering chorines in flimsy dressing-gowns. If the young man can survive his own embarrassment, the friendship may continue.

Some of the girls do well in marriage and return to say hello. One, who had just spent her honeymoon in Cannes, said as she nonchalantly peeled off her gloves: "We stayed at the Carlton. Oh, it's nothing much, you know, darling—something like Lyons's Corner House."

In which you will hear once more the true accent of insular Britain, the rejection of all Continental fripperies, the insistence that a nice girl can earn her living by nudity without nonsense. So alike on the surface, so different underneath, an unbridgeable gulf separates Great Windmill Street from Montmartre and Broadway. When it's strip-tease time in America and Montmartre, it's September Morn over here.

Windmill girl Beryl Catlin performs a mask dance . . . "We're really quite a modest lot"

Tote offices like this took £21,000,000 in 1947. Who gets the benefit?

WHERE DO TOTE TAKINGS GO?

Most interests have a share in the Tote profits—except the small punters. Now they are asking for a better deal

LAST YEAR THE TOTE took £21,133,774. If you've ever had a bob each way on a horse that's still running, the chances are your bet is submerged in that huge total.

What happened to your money? Now, with flat racing off, is the time for taking stock.

The vague complaints which started soon after the tote was introduced over eighteen years ago have been resolving themselves into pointed accusations of unfairness and misuse of profits.

When General Sir Miles Dempsey, former Second Army commander, became chairman of the Racecourse Betting Control Board in July, 1947, he inherited a legacy of bad feeling.

The figures for 1946 had shown a clear profit of £328,000. Nothing, said the critics, was being done to help the future of racing or to improve conditions for racegoers.

Australians visiting British racecourses were shocked at the lack of comfort. In Australia, where bookmakers are taxed one per cent of their earnings, the money is used to build stands and refreshment rooms. What evidence was there, the critics wanted to know, that tote profits in Britain were going back into racing?

To answer that, we must take a good look at the tote.

In 1928, Parliament passed a private Bill creating the Control Board and giving it a monopoly of betting by mechanical totalizators on approved racecourses.

The board has twelve members, seven appointed by racing authorities and five by the Government. The Treasury, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Secretary for Scotland each appoint a member. The chairman and another member are appointed by the Home Secretary.

Only the chairman is paid a salary and, although wild gossip has fixed General Dempsey's salary as high as £10,000 a year, the actual figure (officially unpublished) is probably round about £4,000 a year.

Three members are appointed by the Jockey Club, which controls flat racing. Two are nominees of the National Hunt Committee, which controls chasing; one of Tattersall's Committee, which deals with all questions relating to bets; and one of the Racecourse Association.

So the board represents all sections of racing—except the ordinary punter.

Once a month the board meets in a Georgian house in Grosvenor Street, London, where it surveys and controls the work done on the many British racecourses with tote facilities.

The Control Board is non-profit making in the sense that by law every penny of the profit must go back into racing. The Treasury has not so far tried to grab any of the surplus, contenting itself with the fact that the tote pays income tax on its gross profits like any other concern.

In eighteen years the tote has put back a million pounds into racing, by subsidizing transport of horses to racecourses and by helping breeding and veterinary science.

The individual racegoer, though he did not share in the profits directly, was content to believe that in the long run the tote profit would give him better racing. Now he is not so sure.

Perhaps it would clear the air a little to reveal a few figures and show what, in fact, does happen to the profits. Take a look at the ledger for 1946—profit £328,000.

To the Central Racing Reserve Fund, £127,487. Towards the cost of transporting racehorses to meetings (Jockey Club and National Hunt), £100,000. To Racecourse Tote Charity Trust, £32,800. To assisting point-to-point, military and minor National Hunt meetings, £13,688. To Pony Turf Club racing, £2,000. To Jockey Club, £28,025. To Administration of the National Hunt Committee, £10,000. To National Hunt Accident Fund, £5,000. To Photo Finish, £9,000.

Owners Want a Slice, Too

What else could or should be done with the money? Many racecourses think it only fair that the whole of the surplus should be used directly to give the racegoers (who provided it in the first place) a better deal.

Owners, too, have advanced their claim for assistance from tote profits—and without owners there would be no more racing.

Only lately the Racehorse Owners' Association calculated that 5,000 owners were losing £2,500,000 a year to keep 700 horses in training.

Final say on the operations of British totes lies with the Home Secretary. Millions of racegoers will look to him, in the last resort, to ensure that tote betting is run for the benefit of the small punter and not the man who thinks in terms of hundred-pound bets.

The small punters today are pressing their claims.

ALEXANDER DILKE

THIS WEEK'S COVER

How does an artist get his ideas? Yates Wilson, who painted this week's cover, "Family Album," says: "I was arguing one day with a man about which was the most revealing human feature. I can't remember now how the argument went, but a phrase stuck in my memory. 'The wrinkle,' this man said, 'is the crowning beauty and dignity of age.' I'd never thought of it like that before, and I suddenly wanted to paint a wrinkled old lady contrasted with a child. I played around with the idea for a while—and 'Family Album' is the result."

FREE SPEECH

DESPITE TODAY'S AUSTERITIES, I think there can have been few periods when bringing up children gave parents more satisfaction than the present.

I am the mother of three children, aged seven and a half, six, and two years, and looking after them is certainly a full-time job. In addition to keeping them clean and tidy, I do the weekly wash at home, and spend weary hours queueing.

But it is such a satisfying job. Children are now recognized as the country's number one priority—and, between us, the State and my husband and I are raising three fine kids! — MRS. G. GILBERT, 24 Manor Park Road, London, E.12.

INSANITARY

IT'S HIGH TIME WE PUT A STOP to the revolting practice of burying our dead. They are overcrowding the living, and I would willingly set bulldozers to clean up the grotesque memorial grounds they occupy, and transform them into playing fields.

Cremation is the answer to this insanitary custom. — ANDREW FRASER, 48 Dalkeith Road, West Dulwich, London, S.E.21.

WASTE

AS A REGISTERED DISABLED ex-Serviceman of the first World War, I applied to the Ministry of Labour last year for training in another trade.

I was sent to a training college in Exeter and began a six-month course as a surgical appliance maker (leather). After my training was completed, I returned home and was informed that there was not one vacancy in this trade in the whole north-west area. Now I learn from the Ministry of Labour that it has great difficulty in placing me anywhere in the country.

Why does the Ministry send disabled people to be trained for work in which it knows they cannot be employed? Money, labour, material and time are wasted.

If mine were an isolated case it would be a small grievance. But it isn't. There are lots more in the same boat.—EDWIN THOMAS, 43 Exchange Street, Darwen, Lancs.

OVERLAP

I LIVE IN AN AVENUE containing sixteen houses. Coal is delivered by nine coalmen, working from three coalyards. Why cannot someone pull tight the strings of this loose state of affairs?

Our letters are delivered by one postman, working from one centre. Why not coal?—P. HERBERT, 32 Uplands Avenue, Bradford.

SHORTAGE?

ONIONS ARE IN SHORT SUPPLY in this town, and are only sold on condition that shoppers buy more potatoes. Most of the neighbours buy seventy pounds or so of potatoes a week to feed families of four, and have fried potatoes four times a day. Only the Co-operative stores ration their customers.

No, there's no shortage of potatoes here. It seems distribution is at fault in the rest of the country.—Miss D. T., Oldham, Lancs. (Full name and address enclosed.)

P.S. *On British Films; Sport; the National Health Act; and Black Market Informers*

SACRIFICING BRITISH FILM art for cheap commercialism, as suggested by Hubert Cole in his article "Now We Need The Stars" (JOHN BULL, January 3), will not pay in the long run. We criticize Hollywood trash, so why start making it here?

The British filmgoer is heartily sick of stars who can't act. We much prefer Kathleen Ryan in a grubby jumper portraying a woman with a soul to an impeccable doll in a streamlined sweater. — S. V. CROSS, 26 St. Anthony's Road, Preston, Lancs.

Our Films are Different

OF COURSE WE WANT to see British films beating the world, but don't spoil them by making them "American." It's the difference between American and British films that makes us want British films now. — MARION McKINLAY, 19 Bathgate Drive, Strandtown, Belfast.

∴ *Hubert Cole writes: Expansion of British films inevitably means production of some below first class. These can be sold to the world only if embellished with heavily publicised stars. Therefore, let's manufacture stars on provedly successful Hollywood lines. My article did not propose that we should imitate Hollywood in the making (i.e. production, writing, directing) of British films.*

Total War in Sport

THE TRUTH of Alan Hoby's article, "Why Americans Always Win" (JOHN BULL, January 10), is undeniable.

But when he suggests that we should take sport more seriously and develop the American "total war" methods of playing games he doesn't realize that it is part of the British character to think more of the game than the result.

Our high reputation for *sportsmanship* is worth far more than any number of trophies on the national sideboard. — A. W. WARBIS, 1 Woodland Road, Chingford, London, E.4.

Are We Defeatist?

BRITISH RIDERS on British motor cycles scored resounding victories in 1947. Practically every major event was won by a Briton, from the Manx T.T. to smaller events throughout the Continent.

Even in America, British machines are sweeping the board. Why must we always hark back to our defeats instead of rejoicing over our victories? — R. HUGHES (aged 14), 149 Glenalmond Street, Sandyhills, Glasgow.

Doctors' Complaint . . .

IT IS NOT PLAYING the game to print such an inaccurate account of medical opposition to the National Health Service as appeared in JOHN BULL under the heading "Unhealthy Hold-up" (January 10).

The things we object to in the Bill are the purely political manoeuvres and have nothing whatever to do with healing. Our demands could be granted without impairing the proposed Act's efficiency.

We are perfectly within our rights to refuse service under an Act which does us the greatest injustice. If we were miners we should strike — but being doctors we shall carry on our healing work, whether we enter the national service or not.—DR. A. E. MOORE, 45, Station Road, Histon, Cambs.

. . . Diagnosis: Snobbery

PLAY THE GAME, doctors! Present attitude of doctors to the National Health Act is, in my opinion, party politics and snobbery in its grossest form.

Can they be serious in saying they could not take the same pride in their work when serving the State as they do now? Where would we be today if the workers adopted this attitude? — PANEL PATIENT, Grangemouth, Stirlingshire. (Full name and address enclosed.)

Malta Beat Racketeers

SCHEME TO STAMP OUT the black market by a system of informers suggested by "Yorky" (JOHN BULL, January 3), was operated in Malta during the island's siege, 1941-43.

A proportion of the fines imposed for excess price offences was given to those who laid information leading to the convictions. Price rackets soon dropped off.—MALTA DEFENDER, Bolton. (Full name and address enclosed.)

Cruel Nature

I FULLY AGREE with the reader who complained that nature was unfair to her children. My husband and I, just plain, ordinary folk, had been married several years before we were blessed with a little son.

He is now three years old, and as pretty as a picture. But recent medical opinion suggests he may be a mental defective. As far as we know nothing can be done to help him.—MOTHER, Birmingham. (Full name and address enclosed.)

Because of space shortage only a limited selection of the many readers' letters submitted can be printed. If your views are squeezed out, it does not mean the Editor has overlooked them. For every letter used, John Bull pays one guinea. Letters should be marked "Free Speech" and carry the full name and address of the sender (preferably, though not necessarily, for publication)

JOHN BULL QUIZ

SHOWS

(1) From which shows come the hits, "We'll Gather Lilacs in the Spring Again"; "Doing What Comes Naturally"? (2) Who wrote both *Peace in Our Time* and *Present Laughter*? (3) Which perennial farce is always advertised with a picture of an old lady showing trousers under her skirts, and captioned "Still Running"? (4) Which two shows had runs of over two thousand performances?

GARDENING

(1) Which of these are regarded as pests: ladybirds, centipedes, millipedes, wire worms, earth worms, glow worms? (2) What is the name of the portable glass shelters which protect plants or rows? (3) What is meant by hydroponics? (4) What are perennial plants?

WARS

(1) Which are the two sides in the Chinese Civil War? (2) Why are Greek Army convoys often led by lorries containing prisoners? (3) Which two great Powers are said to be waging a "cold war"? (4) Has Britain made peace with Germany yet?

LINERS

(1) Which is the biggest liner in the world? (2) Why are liners so called? (3) What do M.V., S.S. and R.M.S. stand for in front of liners' names? (4) What happened to the *Lusitania*?

(Answers on page 18)

STRANGER IN YOUR OWN HOUSE!

That's the feeling you're likely to get if you visit the Commons. This shouldn't be so, for M.P.s are your representatives and the affairs that they discuss are your affairs

Queueing for the House of Commons. Those who get in find it hard to follow what's going on

WE ARE IN THE MIDDLE of a most momentous session of Parliament, and yet its proceedings are conducted behind all-but-locked doors as far as the average citizen who wants to attend is concerned.

There are only eighty seats in the present House of Commons (which is the former House of Lords) available for some twenty-three million voters!

And even if a member of the public does get a seat in the Commons public gallery, the speeches of his legislators may seem to him almost deliberately wrapped in mystery.

At its best, a visit to the House is much like the gamble of a theatrical "first night." No one knows what turn the plot will take during the evening, and although the "curtain" rises at a stated time, no one can tell at what hour it will fall; or what the reception will be like. Worse, there is no means of telling when—or even if—the stars are going to make an appearance!

Do you prefer to queue or book a seat in advance? The latter you get by writing to your M.P., and he will do his best. But remember there are only eighty seats and over 600 M.P.s who ballot for them. If you get a ticket, it is only available between opening time at 2.30 p.m. and 3 o'clock.

Ask a Policeman

If you prefer to queue—well, you know all about that, and any policeman at Westminster will direct you where to stand. On two recent visits I counted sixty-seven in the queue on one day and eighty-five on the other before opening time.

Inside the House, the first item on the programme is "Question Time." M.P.s are allowed to ask three questions a day, while the Ministers give what they consider adequate and diplomatic answers. The original questions have been put down previously on paper and the Minister (or his deputy) provided with answers by civil servants. The object of the earnestly inquiring M.P.s is to get the Minister involved in "supplementary" questions "arising out of . . . etc., etc."

Any sort of questions can be (and are) put down. Is the Minister aware—how on earth could he be?—that Mrs. Johnson's potato patch at Chorlton-cum-Hardy is over-run by the R.A.F.? Or is another Minister aware of the state of the drains at Galashiels? And what does he propose to do about them? By now the visitor has had time to peer down from his lofty gallery at the picture as a whole.

It could be more impressive. The debating arena is fashioned after the style of a medieval banqueting hall. And the acoustics are matched by the generally low standard of diction and voice production.

The visitor in the Strangers' Gallery many spot some man talking vaguely in the direction of the Speaker. "Hope make myself quite clear on this point," is about all that can be clearly heard. Most of the speech sounds as if it is being uttered in some strange back-talk tongue. Only disconnected snatches emerge.

All kinds of things may happen after the hour devoted to questions.

More often than not the Speaker rises and leaves the House, which indicates that the House is "going into Committee." Or else there may be a set debate or the resumption of one. But whatever happens, it is seldom, if ever, so impressive to the spectator in the gallery as it is averred to be by the actors themselves in the arena.

Uncomfortable and Puzzled

This may very well be largely due to two things — the uncomfortable, inadequate accommodation in the public gallery, and the general absence of any clue to what is actually in progress in the Chamber itself. Is there any hope of improvement on either count? I doubt it.

During a recent visit to the Commons I went next door, where the new Chamber is slowly rising from the old one's ashes.

I found it still only in the skeleton stage, a framework of red-painted girders nestling under Big Ben and as yet only dimly suggesting its former shape. Now, when this new Chamber was being planned many of the younger M.P.s wanted something different. Some wanted a building that would be big and modern and streamlined, that would cut completely away from the fusty Victorian atmosphere of the old Chamber. They were so revolutionary as to demand a seat for every M.P., a desk for every M.P., and a nice gallery from which their constituents could both see and hear.

They even suggested that the House should be wired for broadcasting and prepared for television.

How About a "Scoreboard"?

A seat for every M.P.? Sorry. There will be only 430 seats for the 600 odd Members. As for the public, who are paying for it all, present plans allow for about a hundred more seats than before.

The "Mother of Parliament" moves slowly, and perhaps takes a little too much vain pride in how it was all done yesterday.

Is it beyond the ingenuity of the times in which we live to have an electric sign in the front of the public gallery (and facing it) which would tell visitors who was "up," his name and constituency, the subject under discussion, and perhaps even some indication of the next important speaker?

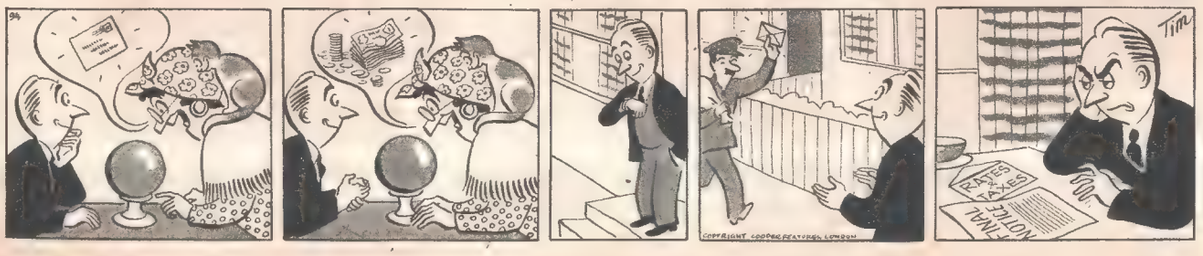
Visiting the House of Commons should not give one of its twenty-three million humble owners the feeling that he has entered an out-of-date museum.

Even museums are changing beyond recognition these days.

GORDON BECKLES

OH, JOHNNY!

by TIM



WITH MY FEET UP

by Ian Fox

Fashions on the Farm

ALL COW LOVERS will be pleased to hear of Mrs. Barbara Woodhouse, of Stoke Mandeville, Buckinghamshire, who dresses up her sixteen cows according to the weather.

In summer the cows wear cotton dresses. In winter they wear warm woollies, probably to prevent the milk arriving as ice cream. In wet weather they wear mackintoshes. I gather, however, that they are not allowed to carry umbrellas.

If this goes on, I can foresee mannequin parades at cattle markets and *The Farmer and Stockbreeder* coming out with a glossy fashion supplement.

In its society gossip column, entitled "Behind the Cowsheds," will be such items as: "That well-known bovine beauty, Lady Shorthorn, who can trace her pedigree back to Europa's bull, was looking very smart in a hand-woven loose cover in a shade of pinky beige which was exactly matched by the colour of her horn varnish. She looked very fit and well after her holiday at the Home Farm where, she told me, the bran mash is plentiful and good."

* * *

What a chattering and mooing there will be when the cows get together ready for milking time.

"Don't look now," says one cow to another, "but here comes that dreadful Miss Lightfoot with a new hat on."

"And wearing a cowslip."

"She's been dolling herself up ever since she was milked by that young man from the agricultural college."

"Trying to look like a heifer at her age. . . . Why, hello, Miss Lightfoot, haow naow braown caow?"

"I'm ever so well, thank you."

"What a charming ensemble."

"Oh, do you like it? I'm so glad. It's supposed to give me the New Look."

"The *New* Look? Just what you wanted, wasn't it?"

"I got the pattern for the skirt from my daughter—calf length, of course."

"And the blouse?"

"Well, it was a Spanish design by Monsieur Ferdinand, but ehctually I had it made up by that old cow Madame Florabella."

"And where, may I ask, did you get the coupons? I thought you used your last on that tartan tail cosy."

"That's *my* secret. You'd be surprised what you can do with a few extra pints in the right places. . . . Oh look, girls, here comes that *nice* Mr. Bull. Is my hat on straight?"

THE TWIST OF THE KNIFE

by HECTOR BOLITHO

ILLUSTRATED BY RONALD SEARLE

The colonel and his wife, the major and his son . . . It is easier to see the mote in another man's eye than the beam in one's own

The knife was about to descend when the sentry burst in. The fatal thrust into my heart was not to be delivered yet

THE COLONEL AND HIS WIFE always struck me as being a sad couple; sad and faintly contemptible. The first time I saw them was at a party in the officers' mess at Windsor. It was winter and she was wearing a fur coat that looked as if the colonel had shot it on safari, quite recently.

She had a hard face; the sort of woman you would fight with rather than for. The colonel himself! Well, isn't there something pathetic about professional soldiers between wars, reduced from flourishing swords to handing round cups of tea? There stood the colonel, with the medals of a dozen campaigns on his tunic, looking at the commanding eye of his wife and seeming to say, "I faced the Afghans with their swords and the Huns with their guns, but I've lost this campaign. I'm still frightened of *you*." And he was.

I cannot tell you the colonel's name because his widow is still living, belligerently, at Slough, Bucks. Let us call him Colonel Paltry.

To write thus coldly of a man whom I saw lying dead, with a Japanese knife wound deep in his heart, is no tribute to me. But we were prisoners together for three years, in Java, and I came to despise him; so much that I haven't a tear to shed over him, dead or alive. At my age you ration your emotions.

May I begin in the middle of my story? Imagine me, a war-weary British major, forty-three, shabby, thin, silent, with all my thoughts curling back into myself, like the tendrils of a sea anemone when it is closing. (Nobody can say professional soldiers haven't a touch of the poet in them after that.)

The scene is the deck of a troopship coming through the Red Sea. The day was drunk with sun-heat and I was looking out to the startling height of Mount Sinai, splitting the blue Arabian sky. Ahead of me was the prospect of England, and my old father. Beyond that, Connecticut, where my son was waiting for me. He was as fat as a partridge, they told me in their letters; my father had sent him across the Atlantic when my wife died, so that the boy could miss some of the horrors of the war.

So these were the two plums waiting to fall into my weary hands; an old father, exhausted by the war but gallant still, and safe in his cold house in Essex, and my son, also safe and healthy, waiting for me in the States. The war hadn't been wholly unkind to me; it seemed worth while coming home.

Behind me were the three stinking years on the side of that railway track in Java. I can see your nostrils twitch and hear you murmur, "Hell, it's going to be another of those p.o.w. stories!" But there is more to it than that.

Imagine a valley between the Java hills, with slow, treacly rain falling most of the time. Then bursts of sunshine that made you mop your brow. I think "sultry" is the word for that place. Patter, patter of rain, the steaming earth between the railway tracks that ran up the valley, and the row of bungalows that were our prison. I felt like warm oil during the daytime, but the nights were rather pleasant.

The moon always looked so clean and washed, and one might have enjoyed the caress of the mountain winds if it hadn't been for the Jap sentries, pitiless and motionless as marble, watching and waiting. Then the curious sort of suspicious whisper from their feet when they moved. Do you know what I mean? Suspicious whisper of their feet. It sounded like that to me when I heard them moving beyond the plantation of cannas.

The cannas, with big red and yellow blossoms, were part of the new war we had to fight; the war to keep our pride, our self esteem, and our sense of humour. It was because Colonel Paltry gave up this battle that I lost my last shred of respect for him.

A GARDEN is a great tonic to an Englishman. He never feels it is the least bit sissy to clear a patch of earth, in India, Africa, Egypt or Upper Tooting, and fill it with asters, geraniums, or anything else that grows. There were eighteen of us at Tjilaboeng, all officers, and we hadn't been in the rickety bungalows three days when we gave up staring at the imprisoning hills, to make wooden spades with which we dug four big garden beds.

In them we planted cannas, artichokes, and some other flowers. The artichokes did double duty, because we used them first as floral decorations to make the bungalows look a bit more like home. Then, when they were weary, we popped the flowers into a sort of stew. With only five ounces of rice a day we had to doll up our meals with a little imagination.

I hated the Japs, on principle. They were everything an enemy should be; crafty, treacherous and pigheaded. But there was one side of them I found rather attractive. Their childishness: their liking for childish things.

Those Japanese sentries liked us to teach them English nursery rhymes and songs. It was a bit comical to see a Japanese sentry stand to attention and sing, in a series of hisses, "Auld Lang Syne," or recite, "Dickory, Dickory, Dock."

The best way was to be amiable with our guards, since we had to live with them, whether we liked it or not. But Colonel Paltry was pompous with them; rude, and forever on edge. He was certainly behind the door when the art of being tactful was handed out. The result was that the Japanese hated him.

I DON'T wish to weary you with a long description of our life there, or of Colonel Paltry's absolute inability to fit into the picture. He just had no warmth in him, and he used resentment as a staple diet. The story I wish to tell is of the day when I came upn him, fuming with rage, with a sentry's bayonet five inches from his stomach. The colonel was purple and ridiculous; the sentry was smiling, with some sort of Oriental wisdom that made him master of the situation.

When the colonel saw me he yelled, "Come and do something about this filthy savage. He says he won't let me pass until I tell him a nursery rhyme, By God, the fellow's mad."

I went up to them and the sentry smiled at me amiably. I tried to look very British, with the dust of the parade ground at Aldershot still in my voice, as I said, "What does all this mean?"

Colonel Paltry spluttered at me, "The idiot says he won't let me pass. I don't know any nursery rhymes. You've got a boy! Do you know any?"

I took out a pencil and piece of paper and wrote in block letters:

> Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
> How I wonder what you are!
> Up above the world so high,
> Like a diamond in the sky.

I wish you could have seen the colonel's face as I recited the verse. It was a study. But the Japanese sentry was delighted and withdrew his bayonet as I handed him the slip of paper. He said, "I learn a leetil Inglish," and then read:

> Tweenkil, tweenkil, lettle stor,
> How I wan-dor what you or,
> Oop above a wor-led so hij,
> Like a dee-mind in a ske.

Colonel Paltry walked away with me. "Darned idiot," was all he could say coherently. But I felt that he was wrong and said, "Well, I'd sooner recite nursery rhymes to a Japanese than have a Japanese recite the death sentence over me." I left it at that and went back to my bungalow.

It is annoying, the tricks one's memory plays with one. I cannot for the life of me recall even the month when this happened. I remember that it was a very warm day, but most of the days were warm. However, I am absolutely certain of this, that it was a week later when Captain Lugard shot into my room like a rocket and said, "The colonel has been stabbed."

Lugard occupied the bungalow next to mine and he usually ate his meals with the colonel. He would kowtow to anyone and he often did the colonel's chores. I must sound a critical sort of man, but Lugard was about as sour-blooded as Colonel Paltry and they made a good pair. There is a bond between

mean men. However, I hurried over with him and there was poor old Paltry, cold, with a horrible wound right into his heart. I knew enough about the human body and wounds to realize that he had been stabbed with a knife and that the blade had been twisted, round and round, after it had entered Paltry's breast.

There was nothing for it but to call the Japs. Silence fell on the prison camp that day: silence and fear. They allowed us to bury Paltry, and we rigged up a burial service as best we could. We dug a grave for him in a pretty little spot beside the stream, and young Deacon, one of the subalterns, made a wooden cross, with the colonel's name and the date of his death on it.

We could do nothing. I was the senior officer present after that, and I made some sort of protest to the Japanese officer. He did the Japanese equivalent of shrugging his shoulders, said he would report the matter to base, and just looked straight at me as much as to say, "So what?"

I meandered around during the next few days, depressed as hell. The silence was horrible, and there was a good deal of resentment. I felt it every time I came near one of the Japs. But our hands were tied, as you might say. What baffled me was the smile on the face of the sentry who had mastered the words of "Twinkle, twinkle, little star." Whenever I passed him he greeted me like a long lost relation. It was good to have one friend among that unfriendly lot, so I taught him "Jack and Jill" and "One, two, buckle my shoe," to keep up the temperature of his smiles.

Lugard was stabbed exactly seven days after the colonel. The same kind of wound; the same signs of a twisted knife. That day was horrible. The Japanese officer refused to see me, but I watched him from my bungalow, hurrying about, chattering like an ape, sending messengers off to the base from which we got our supplies. There was nothing we could do. We just buried Lugard, beside Colonel Paltry, and Deacon put up another wooden cross.

One can face an enemy when he is in the open, but when one deals with mysteries in the dark, it is pretty shattering. I began to dream. The dream grew with repetition until it became a nightmare, of a Japanese leaning over me, with a knife that came down slowly, towards my heart. And in the dream I could not move, and when I tried to scream, the sound was strangled in my throat. Night after night, I suffered the tortures of the damned with that dream, and usually woke up in a cold sweat, trembling from head to foot.

On the Sunday night after Lugard was stabbed I went to bed early. The Japs weren't very strict with us about hours. I was lying on my bed, thinking of home, and of my youngster, and wondering how long human patience could endure. The door of my room opened.

I don't know much about mesmerism, but thinking it over since, I believe I was mesmerized by that door, slowly opening. I could not move. The door opened far enough for me to see a Japanese soldier who moved into the room; a cramped, sly-footed creature. He closed the door behind him. His face was strange to me, but then they're all so much alike you never know Tom from Dick or Harry among them.

I was just so scared as I lay there that I couldn't even pray. The little rat crept nearer to the bed, his eyes fixed on mine, staring. Then he whipped a knife from the sheath at his side and began to lean over me. Why didn't I yell? Why hadn't I leapt up? I simply don't know. I lay there, and at last I was able to pray.

Then the door was flung open again. I closed my eyes, thinking the knife would touch me at any moment. When I

"It's a gentleman about a telegraph pole, sir"

opened my eyes it was to see the sentry, little "Twinkle, twinkle, little star," coming through the doorway. He grabbed the fellow by the back of the neck and flung him to the floor.

What followed was pretty near the nastiest sight I have ever seen. The sentry grabbed the knife, flung the other Jap to the floor again and ground his boot in his face. Hellish thumps with his boots, until I imagined I could hear the scrunch of bones. Then the extraordinary little fiend came over to me politely, smiled as amiably as ever, and said,

Tweenkil, tweenkil, lettle stor,
How I wan-dor what you or.
Oop above the wor-led so hij,
Like a dee-mind in the ske.

Then he took the unconscious body from the floor by its wrists and dragged it through the open door.

My nerves went after that, and, to be perfectly frank, I was slightly mental. I hate going into that part of the story, for it was unadulterated hell. The war ended and I was flown to an American hospital. I certainly went through my valley of darkness. The chief trouble was insomnia. And only those who have never suffered from insomnia can make light of it. The long, slow torture of one's own imagination, the crawling hours of the night, a fevered mind climbing from one thought to the next, and the alarms of despair.

Then one thinks of the sweetness of obliteration and death, if only they would come. The creeping across the floor, being humbled into a crawling figure, looking out of the window into the blackness of night, attractive compared with the blackness of one's own mind.

I often had the wish to jump. The thought was there often, hanging by that one frail thread of indecision. Yet the thread never snapped. I didn't jump. I tried to fix my thoughts on my boy. I tried to realize he would be ashamed of me.

Sometimes I would lean there against the window sill, praying, plunging my will and my prayers into some distance beyond myself. Reaching towards the stars with my pleading hands and trying to draw strength from the fact of my boy's existence.

Then the dread I had of my bed, during the waking hours, and the dread of snatches of exhausted sleep, because it was then that the dream came. The face of that Jap. The knife coming down slowly; slow as the falling weight of a clock. Then my waking always, just as the knife's tip was over my heart. And the fear that stayed while I was waking; of the knife blade twisting, twisting.

It went on for months. They poured every known sleeping pill into me. The dream remained, less menacing after a time, and I tried to make it into a positive part of my mental pattern and to pretend that it was not an enemy. But it was.

This was more or less how I was feeling on the way home, as I sat on the deck chair, steaming quietly through the Red Sea. Distance seemed to soften the pain and blur the picture, and this release was increased with the thought that I was no longer in the same hemisphere. That helped, no end, and there came nights when I escaped my dream, to wake up fresh and free in the morning.

Then came the Mediterranean, the Bay of Biscay, and England.

There had been a letter from my son, waiting for me in London; just the sort of letter I used to write to my father—cold and shy. It was the first time I had seen my boy's handwriting for three years, because no letters seemed to get through from America to Java towards the end. You've just got to imagine what it meant to me, sitting there with that letter, turning over the three pages, trying to read some emotion into the cold, boyish statements. Life seemed good, all over again.

And the days with my father! All the tenderness we had been too clumsy or too stupid to show, coming out after forty odd years.

He was living at one end of the house, with a woman from the village coming in to cook and clean. They had put out enough silver for a Lord Mayor's banquet. The bottle of champagne he had kept for me, the port and madeira produced at the end, his voice saying, "Which will you have?" as if the cellar were still full. I knew they were his last, hoarded bottles, but I said "port" quite casually, to keep up his little game of pretence.

Then the crowded ship battling through a storm from Liverpool to Halifax, and the train across the border into New England. It was six o'clock in the morning when I arrived at the Connecticut railway station.

When I came to the house where my son had been evacuated, he was still asleep. Mrs. Rhodes was at the door to meet me, and there was coffee already on the table.

"I thought it better not to call him," she said. "I'm sure you will realize that it won't be easy."

"Is he shy?" I asked. "Is he a little afraid?"

"Yes," she answered, "very."

I asked then if I might go and see him asleep, and Mrs. Rhodes led me into my boy's bedroom. What can I say to you of that moment? For all those years I had imagined it would be rather joyous and satisfying, but anxiety rose and troubled me. My son was sleeping with the bedclothes wrapped close about him so that I could see he had grown tall and slim. The fat partridge was already becoming a man.

One hand was curled on the pillow, as if to shield his face. I leaned over him, close enough to hear his calm breathing. I can't tell you what I felt. A strange mingling of completeness and fear. I can say no more than that. Mrs. Rhodes touched my arm and whispered, "Let him sleep."

My boy came downstairs, dressed, about an hour later. We are always wise after the event; I sometimes wonder if all would have been different had I been less shy in that second when the door opened. Had I held out both arms! But a taut, male reserve spread like a gulf between us. My boy came forward slowly, held out his hand and said, "Good morning."

I said, "Good morning, son," and, although Mrs. Rhodes left us alone, we still stood there, grasping wildly at phrases that sounded so silly when they were said. Then Mrs. Rhodes came back and took us in to breakfast and I tried to tell some of my story.

Three days passed before the fatal night when I woke up screaming, after the torture of my dream. I had felt so free of it all, for some weeks. But that night I slept restlessly, and was then plunged

Continued on page 21

Answers to Quiz on Page 15

SHOWS. (1) *Perchance to Dream*; *Oklahoma!* (2) Noel Coward. (3) *Charley's Aunt*. (4) *Co-optimists*—2,325; *Chu Chin Chow*—2,238.

GARDENING. (1) Millipedes and wire worms. (2) Cloches. (3) The soilless cultivation of plants in water containing all the elements they need. (4) Those which last several years, as opposed to annuals (one year only) and biennials (two years).

WARS. (1) The Central Government (led by Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang) and Communists. (2) As hostages against guerilla ambushes and booby traps. (3) U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. (4) No.

LINERS. (1) *Queen Elizabeth*. (2) They belong to a line, or regular series, of passenger ships on a regular route. (3) M.V.—motor vessel; S.S.—steamship or screw steamer; R.M.S.—Royal Mail steamer. (4) She was sunk without warning by a German submarine in 1915.

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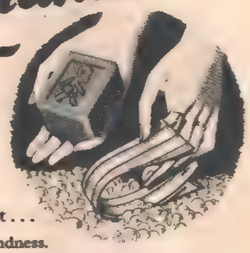

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Continued from page 18

into the darkness of my old fear; the Japanese leaning over me, the raised knife, the terrible feeling of being unable to move as the blade came down over my heart.

Mrs. Rhodes told me that when she came into the room I was still screaming. When I woke up she had turned on the light and my son was beside her. Mrs. Rhodes came over to the bed, but my boy stood far away, near the door, and eyed me strangely. Looking back now, I can only think he was afraid; afraid or mystified.

From that night he avoided me. I don't wish to catch your pity with my story. Because pity from you would excite pity within myself. And that never helps.

The night that I realized how sadly I had lost my boy was Hallowe'en. I must explain that my son had made many friends among the boys in the neighbouring houses. He had become more American than English, and I had to adapt myself to many surprises, his casualness over his clothes, his lack of restraint, and his boisterous way of taking things for granted.

What hurt me was when he came home from school. He would leave his friends outside while he ran in for his baseball glove. I was never allowed to meet any of them. Mrs. Rhodes said to him, again and again, "You must bring your friends in and introduce them to your father." He always mumbled "Yes," but he still hurried into the house and out again, without coming into the room to see me.

Two nights before Hallowe'en, I screamed again in my sleep. Again, Mrs. Rhodes hurried into my bedroom and turned on the light. My son came in slowly, behind her.

I think his sympathy would have cured the loneliness that came after my dream. But he was too young; the mystery of my sick imagination was too perplexing for a boy, and I remained alone.

Early in the morning of Hallowe'en I went up to New York to see a doctor. I don't like the modern practice of taking your troubles to a psychiatrist, because an intelligent man should be able to tidy up his own nervous tangles. The doctor did not help me. He prescribed what the others had prescribed, "Rest," "Patience," and "Time." So I travelled back to Connecticut in a poor frame of mind. The bus stopped at the drug store which was three blocks from the lane that led up to Mrs. Rhodes's house.

I went into the drug store to buy some shaving cream and found about six boys sitting at the ice cream counter; my son among them. I was suddenly very happy. Here, perhaps, was the opportunity I had been waiting for. Those youngsters could not have been more friendly when I went over to them. They had the unsuspicious cheerfulness that is so attractive in American boys, and I asked them all to have ice cream sodas. I purposely addressed no remarks directly to my son, just treating him as "one of the gang."

When we had finished our ice cream sodas, I left the drug store, with the boys milling around me. One of them was a forthcoming lad of about sixteen, and when we were outside, he said, "We'll race you two blocks, major."

It is a bit challenging for sturdy boys to ask a rather weary old soldier to run two blocks to prove his manhood. I looked quickly at my son, but he was gazing across the street as if he had not heard.

I raced with them. My head was throbbing and my heart thumped when I had covered the two blocks. I beat the leading boy by about half a yard and stretched my hands towards the lamp-post at the

Continued on page 22

NOW HE'S OUT OF THE WOOD

"NOW safe in the bank, this splendid prize has given me and my wife a nice feeling of security for the future," said recent £300 winner J. L. Steel, 27 Clinton Road, Leicester. "And we owe this to a few small words on a *Bullets* coupon!"

Our picture was taken when Mr. Steel was with the R.A.F. in West Africa. "I resumed my *Bullets* early last year," he told us, "and a £1 cheque soon arrived."

Get busy with the *Examples* on this page and something good may soon arrive at *your* home—a big cheque, an armchair, a radio, an alarm-clock, or a 14-lb. food parcel! All these are to be won with good *Bullets* this week and, if one of yours is the best, you will soon be discovering for yourself how a £300 cheque can sweep one's worries away.

Radios, Armchairs

amongst Prizes value over

£500

£300 FIRST PRIZE plus RADIO or ARMCHAIR

£25, £10, each plus RADIO or CHAIR

10 of £5, each plus ALARM-CLOCK

50 Fine 14-lb. FOOD PARCELS

"Good Shot" Prizes for 1,948 entrants, each with £10 Prize Opportunity

BULLETS & XWORDS RULES

1. First Prize to best *Bullet* received, others in order of merit—the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.
2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.
3. As entry-fee, enclose P.O. or stamps value 1s. for four *Bullets*, or value 6d. to cover two *Bullets*. Plain paper entries are allowed. If using P.O. make payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* and Crosswords for entry-fees not exceeding 2s. if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.
4. Entries accepted only on condition that results of this week's Contests in JOHN BULL dated February 28, also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding.

STILL GOING—STRONGER!

"When I sought out my old hobby again after the war I was delighted to find *Bullets Bulletin* still going strong," said £300 winner J. L. Steel.

The label below will bring you this bright guide in new and improved 1948 form—it's now going stronger than ever!

Add 2, 3 or 4 Words to any of these "Examples"

To make a *Bullet*, add simply TWO, THREE or FOUR words of apt and original comment to any of the *Examples* below. To use an incomplete *Example*, first complete it with any one word in place of dotted line — then make your *Bullet* as usual.

Industry's Ship
To Save Mankind
Faith In The Future
Earning Dollars
Same For Everyone
Old Hand
Pen v. Sword
In His Glory
We Live And Learn, So
Pride
Licked Into Shape
A Scream
Coming Through
Looked Like A Ghost
Quietly
Tonic For Grandpa
Jumped At
Has No Idea
In Triplicate
Fido Barked And

Incomplete "Examples" — see instructions

Between The .....
Past .....
Offered To .....
When ..... Came Round
..... Contribution
Must Have A .....

ADDRESS ENTRY

"BULLETS" 1,615 (or XWORD 567)
"JOHN BULL," LONG ACRE, LONDON, W.C.2 (COMP.).

Cash and Parcels

THIS WEEK—VALUE UP TO £100 First Prize

£225

Awards value £25 amongst Runners-up—Big Surprise Parcel from Selfridges with each prize value £1 or over.

THIS WAY TO WIN

FIRST complete Square in INK, giving your Answers to Clues below. Then, if you wish to enter *one* extra Answer to any *one, two or three* Clues, give each such word in full in "Extra Answer" Form below Crossword Square.

If you prefer to make out extra Squares on plain paper, you may do so, but form below saves you the time, trouble and paper involved.

Across Clues — **XWORD 567**

1. To make success of reconstruction, this is needed as well as work
2. Those in shows are pretty smart ones
5. Fact of one being out creates discord
7. These have to be fairly deep
10. Is apt to get tied up in knots
12. High temperature can be dangerous to one
13. Certain kind of this has to do with coin

Down Clues

1. Should be used sparingly
2. Business man's pursuit
3. The simplest way of closing this is by employing mines
4. There are some things you can this by rubbing
6. Intelligent dramatic producer does not pay too much attention to
8. Really brilliant player takes one more frequently
9. A man must feel bitter if he can't find this without leaving home
11. As a rule, schoolboys are easier to discipline when under

"BULLETS" WINNERS No. 1,611

FIRST PRIZE, £300 plus Mystery Presentation: H. F. Mullett, c/o Mrs. Evans, West Street, Winsham, Chard, Somerset:

IF WE ALL WORKED THE HOURS WE GROUSE!

SECOND PRIZE, £25: H. R. Tyler, 124 Usher Road, Bow, E.3: ACHES AND PAINS — BEFORE "BREAKS" AND GAINS.

THIRD PRIZE, £10: M. Kirby, 8 Hyde Court, Church Lane, London, N.W.9: GONE IN A FLASH — COMET — SAW WORLD, PROBABLY!

OTHER AWARDS: £9: E. Beattie, 7 Sudbury Way, Speke, Liverpool, 19: THANKS TO THE MINERS — BRITAIN'S "DUNKIRK" BECOMING "ALAMEIN." £8: E. Scott, 4 Flintham Drive, Sherwood, Nottingham: CONTENTED—IVAN—OR *Bosses* "STRIKE." £7: F. Godfrey, 123 Union Road, Sheffield, 11: GOT IT ALL WRONG—FOREIGNER, ALTHOUGH I SHOUTED! £6: R. MacFarlane, 165 Dalmarnock Road, Glasgow: FAR FROM CIVILIZATION — ROCKETS TO "CARRY MAN"?

FIVE of £5: J. Cartwright, 2 Littlewood Road, Cheslyn Hay, near Walsall: IN THE SPIDER'S WEB—FEATHER—MAID *Has* DUSTED! A. Hughes, 26 Joynson Street, Kings Hill, Wednesbury: GRIM PICTURE—IF SHIPYARDS *Hadn't* "SKELETONS." A. H. Hunt, 2 Neath Road, Crynant, Neath: FAR FROM OUR—"CUP OF TEA," VODKA. J. Jones, 53 Eighth Avenue, Bristol, 7: DEAF TO THREE — TELEPHONES. NOW OFFICIAL'S PROMOTED! Mrs. L. Makin, The Poplars, Aberdare: KNOWS HIS WAY ABOUT—EUROPE —"RECLUSE" IN KREMLIN.

Fifty "Bullets" Seasons and 1,948 New "Good Shots" have also been posted.

4 BIG CHEQUES WON XWORD No. 563

WINNING WORDS: ACROSS: 1, Barks. 3, Pars. 5, Gnat. 6, Woes. 9, Sets. 11, Fight. 14, Red. 15, Ruin. DOWN: 2, Riders. 4, Shaves. 7, Host. 8, Guilt. 10, Hide. 12, Tug. 13, Ban.

£100 SHARERS: Miss D. H. Chilvers, 6 Meadowbrook Close, City Road, Norwich; Mrs. C. Mills, 19 Alma Terrace, Aylsham Road, Norwich; Miss R. Tomkins, 2 Benfield Street, Heywood, Lancs; A. V. Walsby, 64 Victoria Avenue, East Ham, E.6. Winners receive Surprise Parcels in addition.

Award value £25 for Runners-up shared between 34 entrants.

STICK 2½d. STAMP here and address this label if you want the help of *Bulletin* and *Gazette* dated Feb. 21 containing **GRAND NEW PRIZE OFFER**

428

NAME .....

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EXAMPLE .....

BULLET .....

EX. .....

B. .....

EX. .....

B. .....

EX. .....

B. .....

Closing Postmark. **1,615** MON., FEB. 9

I agree to Rules and enclose P.O. value .....

No. .....

Signed .....

Address .....

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WIN A CHEQUE AND BIG SURPRISE PARCEL

1 P	L	A		■	2 G		3 G	S	■	
O	I	L	■	S	O	■	A	U	4 G	
	■	5 B		L	L		■	■		
E	L	I	■	■	■	■	■	6 B	A	
7 R	O	O	■	S	■	8	■	O	Z	
■	A	N	■	L	■	A	L	O	E	
9 J	C	■	10	O	O	L	■	■	■	
O	H	O	■	V	O	L	T	■	11	
■	■	B	E	A	M	■	E	V	E	
567 12		I	C	K	■	13	A	I	N	

CLUE	EXTRA ANSWER	Total Fee
No.		6d.
No.		1s.
No.		2s.

(Total fee shown includes entry on Square)

567 Closing Postmark MON., FEB. 9

I enclose P.O. value....

No. .....

Signed .....

Address .....

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In adjudication, all Extra Answers will be read in combination with each other and with all Answers in your Square. Thus your completed Square with *one* extra Answer to *one* Clue will represent *two* full Squares (Entry-fee 6d.), Square with one extra Answer to *two* Clues will represent *four* full Squares (Entry-fee 1s.), and Square with one extra Answer to *three* Clues will represent *eight* full Squares (Entry-fee 2s.).

Single Square with 6d. P.O. or stamps covers dispatch to you of *Crossword Gazette* dated Feb. 21.

Winner—sender of most meritorious set of Answers received—decided by Adjudication Committee on basis of aptness and accuracy. Ties divide. Entrants limited to one prize per Contest and to entry requiring not more than 4s. entry-fee. Signature below is agreement to Rules.

AS I WAS SAYING . . . by HERBERT HODGE

HOW TO CHOOSE A WIFE

"That's the girl for me," he decided. And so she proved

WHEN I FEEL DOWN in the dumps, either about things in general or myself in particular (a regular complaint with me at this time of year), I find the quickest remedy is to go dipping into an old book.

I don't care what the book is about or who wrote it, so long as it's at least a hundred years old. I'm not exactly looking for gems of ancient wisdom. I'm looking for what I call the comforting bits—the odd thoughts, the casual remarks, the intimate glimpses into human nature that so seldom get into the official history books.

I've just been dipping into Cobbett's *Advice To Young Men*—and, as he puts it in smaller type, "incidentally to young women"—written in 1830. It's full of comforting bits.

Tough old Sergeant-Major Cobbett, then over sixty, was all against seeking a safe job in the Civil Service.

"Turn your back on Whitehall and Somerset House," he commands. "Leave the Customs and Excise to the feeble and low-minded. Think not of . . . situations where gaudy habilments and sounding titles poorly disguise from the eyes of good sense the mortifications and the heartaches of slaves. Happiness . . . is to be found only in independence."

Life's Greatest Luxury

As a Socialist, I'm all against leaving the Government services in the hands of the feeble and low-minded. Yet, as a man, all my instincts are with Cobbett.

When he goes on to point out that "to live upon little is the great security against slavery" I want to pat him on the back.

It's the fear of losing his habitual luxuries that makes many a man submit to mental and spiritual slavery. The man who has learned to live on little knows that he can nearly always manage to earn that little, somehow. So he need never submit to anything that goes against his conscience.

He can afford life's greatest luxury—the luxury of standing on his own feet.

If you say that's not easy when a man's married, Cobbett replies with advice on how to choose the right wife—and illustrates it with one of the most beautiful little love stories I've ever read.

In 1787, when Cobbett was twenty-one, he was "sergeant-major of a regiment of foot" stationed in New Brunswick. There, one evening, he met the thirteen-year-old daughter of a sergeant of artillery.

A few mornings later, in the dead of the Canadian winter, with the snow several feet deep on the ground and the wind bitterly cold, he was walking past her father's house and saw her again. It was hardly light, but she was already up and out in the snow, scrubbing out a washtub. "That's the girl for me," he decided.

Gave Her His Savings

When her father's regiment was ordered home, young Cobbett feared "that gay place Woolwich," crowded with "gaily-dressed and handsome young men," might prove a bit too much for a fourteen-year-old girl, especially if she had to work too hard.

So he gave her all his savings, a hundred and fifty guineas; told her to find some quiet lodgings and to live on the money until he was able to come home and marry her.

"As the malignity of the devil would have it, we were kept abroad two years longer than our time. At the end of four years, however, home I came . . . and got my discharge from the Army. . . .

"I found my little girl a servant of all work (and hard work it was) at five pounds a year, in the house of a Captain Brissac; and, without saying hardly a word about the matter, she put into my hands the whole of my hundred and fifty guineas, unbroken."

But few of us get the opportunity of testing our sweethearts with our savings *before* marriage. Cobbett offers other tests. He tells of a young man courting one of three sisters. Visiting their home when all three were present, he heard one asking the others for "our needle."

"Whereupon," says Cobbett, "the young man withdrew . . . resolved never to think more of a girl who possessed a needle only in partnership. . . ."

Such Girls Are Dangerous

He gives a warning, too, against "laughing, rattling" girls. Once married, he says, they are "generally in the dumps and blue-devils." Quiet girls made the warmest wives.

Cleanliness is another thing to look out for. He advises the young lover, before committing himself to a proposal, "to get a glance, just a glance, at her poll and . . . behind the ears."

The first duty of a husband, he says, is to be master in his own house. The husband who allows his wife to rule him "is the most contemptible of God's creatures." He is "feeble as a reed before the boisterous she-commander . . . and if there be a rope or a river near the sooner he betakes himself to the one or the other the better."

For all its old-fashioned tang, I think there's sound psychology in that.

But he adds that, after he was married, "retaining some of my military manners, I used to romp most famously with the girls that came in my way; till one day . . . my wife said to me, in a very gentle manner, 'Don't do that; I don't like it.'" That was enough. There was no more of it.

And once, in Philadelphia, when his wife couldn't sleep for the barking of the town dogs, he spent the whole night running up and down the street, without his shoes, throwing stones to keep them at a distance.

If Cobbett's ideal of a wife seems a bit difficult to live up to, his ideal of a husband is at least equally difficult. And he did try to practise what he preached.

Through it All Before

I think that's why I find him comforting—why he, and other old writers like him, so quickly dissipate my moments of twentieth-century gloom.

They put things into proportion for me by showing me the long line of men and women who have been through it all before—suffering and striving, hoping and fearing, succeeding and failing, almost exactly like myself.

We who were brought up to believe in the certainty of human progress have had to take a good many knocks these last few years.

And although, of course, we are far too advanced to believe in old-fashioned notions like ancestor-worship, it's comforting to look back at men like Cobbett, occasionally, and to feel we've still got the examples of these ancestors to help us.

Continued from page 21

end of the lane. I leaned against it for a moment, frightened that I would faint, but the youngsters gathered about me and yelled with delight, "Gee, major, you're a champion."

I looked over their faces in the lamplight for one that was not there. My son had not joined in the race.

I walked up the lane alone, and into the solemn house. There was a little sitting-room in front, with an archway into the hall, and I waited there.

Twenty minutes must have gone before the door opened and my son came in. I saw him pass the archway without even looking towards me.

I think some flash of indignation came then. Even anger, perhaps. I called him and he stood, sheepishly, beneath the arch.

I had never raised my voice to him or spoken with the faintest touch of correction or anger. I tried so hard to make my voice seem gentle as I said, "I won, you know."

He did not answer. He looked down to the floor for a few moments and then slowly raised his head. The coldness of his eyes made me feel sick.

Then the anger broke through and I cried at him, "Are you ashamed because I screamed in the night?"

I leaned forward and beat the arm of the chair as I repeated, "Are you ashamed of me?"

My son did not answer. He looked at me for a moment, turned, and walked up the stairs to his room.

The sun-heat came back upon my face, and the cool nights, and the steaming earth between the railway lines at Tjilaboeng, and the burning rubber candles, and the opening door, and the full black horror of my dream.

My body seemed to crumple in the chair as if, at last, that dreadful knife had been thrust and twisted into my heart.

WRITE TO JOHN BULL ABOUT IT

Behind That "Ltd."

A READER raises a subject which will be of interest to those starting new businesses.

"Can you explain," he writes, "why some trading concerns are referred to as companies and others as limited companies or companies limited?

"I am hoping to start a business with two partners, all on equal terms. Which category would such a business come under? And what steps should be taken to ensure that we are correctly registered?"

A limited company is one that has been incorporated under the Companies Acts and registered in the Companies Register at Bush House. Its liability is limited to the value of its shares. Where a company is not registered as "limited," all the partners or shareholders are personally liable for the debts of the company or partnership.

The business this reader hopes to start would be an ordinary partnership unless the three men formed themselves into a private limited company.

If they use a trade name other than their own surnames they will have to register in the Business Names Register at Bush House, London, W.C.2.

Our team of experts will solve your queries (except medical) if you send them to the John Bull Free Advice Service, 186 High Holborn, London, W.C.1. Domestic problems to "Humanist," at same address. Stamped envelope for reply, please.

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